

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252927
Site Address:	43 Old Bath Road, Sonning, Wokingham, RG4 6SY
Expiry Date:	12 February 2026
Site Visit Date:	16 December 2026
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with associated parking and landscaping, following demolition of the existing dwelling.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development Proposals – **Sonning (Limited Development Location)**
Crossrail Safeguarded Route
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone – **Green Risk Zone**
Railways
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 CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals 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 CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB05 – Housing Mix TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements

Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS10 – Meeting our housing needs CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE3 – Environmental standards for residential development CE7 – Low carbon and renewable energy generation CE8 – Protecting renewable energy generation C1 – Active and sustainable transport and accessibility C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design C3 – Active travel C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging H1 – Housing mix, density and standards H6 – Self-build and custom build FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE2 – Biodiversity net gain NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity HC5 – Environmental protection HC7 – Light pollution HC8 – Noise pollution HC9 – Contaminated land and water HC10 – Odor, fumes and dust
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Sonning Design Appraisal

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
241875	Full application for the proposed erection of 1No detached dwelling with associated parking and landscaping. Followed by the demolition of the existing dwelling and garage.	Application withdrawn
251852	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with associated parking and landscaping following demolition of the existing dwelling and garage.	Application withdrawn

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal
WBC Environmental Health – No objections WBC Drainage – No objection subject to condition(s) WBC Highways – No objection subject to condition(s) WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection subject to condition(s)

WBC CIL – CIL commentary
WBC Ecology – No comments received
WBC Waste Services – No comments received

External

Crossrail Ltd – No objection subject to an informative
Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received
Network Rail – No objection subject to an informative

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Sonning Parish Council has carefully considered this application and can find no reason to object. There are however some concerns that require attention. The parking arrangements: - Although much improved, parking does rely on some tandem arrangements, which are unsatisfactory and impractical, and could lead to on road parking. - Overlooking. The proposal does extend beyond the rear of 41 Old Bath Road and there are concerns about loss of privacy and overlooking to this property.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	Three representations received from local residents raising the following concerns: - Impact on privacy of neighbouring properties - Car parking is not functionable - No notice was displayed (Officer comment: The nature of the proposed development does not require a mandatory site notice. Adjoining landowners were all notified when the application was validated.) - Proposed dwelling is too tall and out of keeping with the area.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a detached two storey dwellinghouse located on Old Bath Road, Sonning. The site, and adjoining properties, are marginally elevated in terms of ground level compared to the highway. To the rear, the properties face onto a main railway line.

Proposal Description:

This application seeks approval for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with associated parking and landscaping, following demolition of the existing dwelling. The LPA understand from the applicant's submission that this is a 'Self-Build' property.

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 Context:

Policy CP1(1) only supports development that maintains or enhances the high quality of the environment, with policy CP3 supporting development of an appropriate mass, layout, built form, height and character to the area CP3(a) and which makes a positive contribution to the sense of place and contributes to the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings CP3(f).

The Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document provides further guidance for developers with general guidance that development should respond positively to its site and local context (G1) and respond positively to the local character of the area (G2).

The National Design Guide section B1, paragraph 67 also states that the built form of well-designed places should relate well to:

- the site, its context and the opportunities they present;
- the proposed identity and character for the development in the wider place;

Site Context:

Old Bath Road is characterised by a variety of architectural styles, ranging from several late 19th century dwellinghouses on the northern side of the road to a mix of 20th/21st Century dwellinghouses on the southern side. Roof forms are also extremely varied, as are ridge heights.

Further east along Bath Road the character is similar to the locale of the application site, however there has been more substantial alterations to the residential character of this side of the road, namely as a result of several replacement dwellings that exhibit much more modern architectural styles.

One characteristic almost all properties however share is the generous size of the residential plots and their associated gardens. On the southern side of the road, the rears of the gardens are lined with dense mature vegetation, largely to suppress noise emissions from the railway behind.

Assessment:

The proposed replacement dwelling would be a stark departure from the original architectural style of the existing dwelling; the dwelling would consist primarily of a hipped roof core, with a large two storey gable protrusion on the frontage that includes an array of modern fenestration, plus bath stone pillars to enclose the porch. To the rear, a large two storey rear extension would be created and would have a hip/crown roof form. The maximum height of the dwellinghouse (ridge height) would be approximately 7.5 metres, an increase of 0.5 metres above the height of the existing dwelling.

Other features include a small dormer on the rear elevation and alterations to the parking layout, including the creation of a bin store area. The existing garage is to be retained.

Despite the aforementioned departure from the architectural style of the existing dwelling, it is not considered that the style of the replacement dwelling would be out of keeping with the character of Old Bath Road, attributed to the diverse range of architectural styles seen along the street frontages. The use of clay tiling and red brick elevations is in-keeping with the material palette of the area, and the bath stone pillars/dark grey fenestration would provide a positive contrast to the brickwork.

The height of the proposed dwelling is taller than the existing and would also be marginally taller than the two adjacent properties (nos.41 and 45 Old Bath Road). Whilst noted, this is not considered to have an adverse impact on the character of the area, namely due to the fact that there are dozens of other properties along the street, some assisted by the changes in topography, that are taller than the dwelling proposed. Separation distances from neighbouring properties are acceptable and the property would not appear cramped on the application site.

It is noted that the side access to the rear garden adjacent to the garage appears very thin (0.5 metre width). This is however not a refusable issue, and there remains to be an alternative access on the opposite side of the dwelling which is of adequate width (1 metre wide).

The dwellings existing open frontage, as mentioned above, is to be retained. This is a positive feature of the proposals and ensures that the large front garden offsets the increases in massing proposed.

Overall, the replacement dwelling would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

Changes to fenestration on the frontage and rear elevations raise no concerns as existing outlooks/distances would be unaffected.

Several first floor side windows are proposed but all of them would serve ensembles/bathrooms. Therefore, a condition will be imposed ensuring they are limited in opening height and obscured. Subject to this condition, the proposals raise no concerns on overlooking grounds.

Loss of Light and Overbearing:

The proposed dwelling would actually be sited further away from the boundary with no.41 Old Bath Road than the existing dwelling, maintaining an acceptable 1 metre separation distance from the boundary. The only fenestration that would be minorly impacted either serves bathrooms or a garage and as they are not habitable, the minor impact on them does not warrant a reason for refusal.

From a loss of light perspective, the rear extension does protrude rather significantly to the rear but considering the orientation of the gardens (south facing) and the fact that BRE 45 degree measurements indicate no impact onto no.41's rear ground/first floor fenestration would occur, there are no concerns of an adverse loss of light to the neighbouring property.

Turning to the impact onto no.45 Old Bath Road, the dwelling would maintain a separation distance of 7 metres from the side boundary with the property, and a further 1.5 metres from no.45's side elevation. Given the substantial separation distances, there are no concerns on overbearing or loss of light grounds.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposed extended driveway would accommodate 4no. vehicle parking spaces and utilise the existing dropped kerb crossing, whilst the existing garage accommodation would be used for cycle storage. A bin store area is also proposed adjacent to the parking area.

WBC Highways have no concerns related to the parking provision proposed to serve the proposed dwelling, nor do they anticipate any impacts on highway safety. Subject to compliance with the parking provision proposed, they raise no objections to the proposals.

Amenity Space:

The proposed development would not harm the usability of the site's rear amenity space.

Flooding and Drainage:

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and at low risk of surface water flooding. WBC Drainage have no objections to the proposals, subject to a drainage strategy being secured via condition.

Landscape and Trees:

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (ROAVR Group, December 2025) has been submitted with this application.

WBC Landscape and Trees raise no objections to the removal of T1 & T2 which are small low quality garden trees. Furthermore, they do not consider that there will be any additional impact on the off-site tree T13 as a result of the proposals. Landscape wise, the open frontage is to be retained which is welcomed.

Subject to conditions to secure compliance with the arboricultural mitigation, landscape details and the retention of existing vegetation, there are no objections from WBC Landscape and Trees.

Ecology:**Bats:**

A bat scoping assessment and follow-up stage 2 emergence surveys (Dr Jonty Denton, August 2025) have been submitted with this application.

The conclusions of the reports indicate that no bats were witnessed exiting or entering the property's existing roof form, with limited activity around the site apart from foraging. Therefore, it has been concluded that the site has negligible potential for roosting bats.

The standard bat informative will be imposed on the decision if approved.

Great Crested Newts:

The application site is located within a Green Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts (GCN), which indicates that GCNs are unlikely to be present on the application site. As such there is no anticipated impact on this protected species as a result of the proposed development.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

As this application is for a self-build dwelling, it is exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gains.

Notwithstanding this, a pre-occupation condition will be imposed if recommended for approval, securing minor biodiversity enhancements across the site.

Other:

The application site is located immediately adjacent to a main railway line to the north. Network Rail were consulted on this application. They raise no objections to the proposals but due to the close proximity of the proposed development to Network Rail's land and the operational railway, Network Rail requests the applicant / developer engages Network Rail's Asset Protection and Optimisation (ASPRO) team prior to works commencing.

This is not a planning requirement, but an informative will be placed on the decision notice should the application be approved.

Conclusion:

Overall, the proposed development complies with the development plan. Subject to conditions, this application is recommended for approval.

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.

RECOMMENDATION

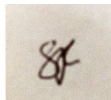
Conditions agreed: Yes

Recommendation: Approval

Date: 29 January 2026

Earliest date for decision: 11 January 2026

Recommendation agreed by:
(Authorised Officer)



Date: 2.2.26