

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242708
Site Address:	Powerscourt, Western Avenue, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3BN
Expiry Date:	10 January 2025
Site Visit Date:	5 November 2024
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a detached outbuilding with incidental residential storage at first floor level following the demolition of the existing single garage.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Major Development Location (Woodley)
Landscape Character Assessment Area – Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability

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 CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Woodley Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
F/2011/1665	Proposed erection of first floor front, side and rear extensions to dwelling with solar panels on side and rear elevations, plus single storey rear extension, new pitched roof over existing single storey rear extension and erection of parapet wall to side of existing balcony.	C/A – 06/10/2011

03002	Proposed single garage and extension to the main dwelling.	C/A 07/07/1975	–
02564	Outline application for conversion of existing garage into living accommodation & erection of new garage.	C/A 29/04/1975	–
32/69	Detached house and garage.	C/A 15/05/1969	–

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Landscape and Trees: Object on the following grounds – the mass, scale and siting of the proposed building would appear as a separate dwellinghouse and would be out of character.

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Woodley Town Council raised no objections.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is a detached 1970s dwellinghouse located towards the northern edge of Woodley. The main dwelling is set well back from the highway and benefits from an existing single garage and a raised amenity area to the front, as well as other later alterations and additions. Mature trees adjacent to the site's northern boundary contribute significantly to the character of the street scene and partially screens the site's frontage from public vantage points on the highway.

Proposal:

This application proposes the erection of a detached outbuilding to the front of the main dwelling to serve as a single garage space and gym, with storage space and a bathroom contained within the roof space above and an attached log store, following the demolition of the existing detached single garage. Following discussions with the applicant, revised plans were submitted which comprised the following amendments:

- The total height was reduced by approximately 0.2m to 5.9m.
- The front gable projection element was removed, with a subsequent reduction in footprint to approximately 56.4sqm.
- The proposal would have a total depth of approximately 6.9m and width of 8.35m.

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 and other material considerations.

Design and Character of the Area:

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.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF requires that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Paragraph 139 states that development that is not well designed should be refused.

Section 4.11 of the Borough Design Guide states that garages (or other outbuildings) should not be sited in front gardens or project forward of the building line of a property. Nonetheless, the key considerations for all proposed additions to residential dwellings are they should be well designed, respond positively to the original dwelling, contribute positively to the local character and relate well to neighbouring properties.

The immediate street scene is characterised by a detached dwellings which are set well back from the highway and vary considerably in terms of their architectural form and appearance. Mature trees and more recent green infrastructure, together with generous separation gaps and low boundary treatments contribute significantly to its spacious green character. Detached garages/outbuildings sited forward of the main dwelling are a common feature and these vary considerably in terms of their form and scale. The wider character of the area comprises a varied mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings.

The proposal would mark a significant change to the site's frontage, constituting a considerable expansion of built form forward of the front building line, as well as a considerable increase in footprint, height and scale in comparison to the existing single garage. However, there are other examples of large front projections within the immediate surroundings.

Orchard Cottage to the west of the site benefits from a large front addition including garage accommodation which is visually prominent from the street scene and is similar in terms of scale and form to the proposal. Moreover, planning permission was recently granted for the subdivision of The White Cottage and the erection of a self-contained

residential dwelling to the front of the existing property which is currently being constructed (consent ref 232033). There are also several examples of smaller garages/outbuildings sited to the front of neighbouring properties, including No.2 Butts Hill Road immediately adjacent to the east.

While the proposal is not directly comparable to these neighbouring examples, the proposed development forms part of the character of the area and would not introduce adverse harm in this respect.

Following discussions with the applicant, revised plans were submitted to address concerns regarding the overall bulk of the proposal and its relationship with the main dwelling. While the proposal remains considerably larger than the existing single garage, the revised scheme has sufficiently reduced the overall bulk and scale of the outbuilding so that it would not detract from the appearance of the main dwelling. Moreover, the proposal would remain well set back from the highway and would be partially screened by the mature trees adjacent to the northern boundary, further mitigating the visual impact of the scheme. The proposed external materials would also complement the main dwelling.

The proposed outbuilding would comprise a home gym and single garage parking space, with storage space shown at first floor level. These proposed non-habitable spaces within the outbuilding would be incidental to the residential use of the site which would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area due to its reliance on and functional link with the host dwelling. The creation of a separate residential unit would potentially have greater impacts in terms of local character, parking and residential amenity which have not been considered here. As such, a condition is recommended which restricts the use of the outbuilding to incidental accommodation to the main dwelling only.

While the proposal would conflict with the guidance contained within the Borough Design Guide SPD, due to the reasons identified above the proposal would not dominate the site's frontage and would not appear out of keeping with the considerably varied surroundings. Therefore, the proposal would not introduce adverse harm to the visual amenity of the street scene or local character in accordance with Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking: The proposal would introduce first floor fenestration on the side elevations facing both immediate adjacent neighbours. However, due to the siting of the proposal and its orientation the western elevation would face onto the driveway serving La Chenaie adjacent to the west. Rooflights are proposed on the eastern elevation facing No.2 Butts Hill Road, preventing any direct views onto the adjoining private amenity space. To prevent any adverse overlooking opportunities onto this neighbour, a condition which restricts the insertion of any additional first floor windows on the eastern elevation is recommended.

Loss of Light and Overbearing: Although the proposal would be sited in close proximity to the shared side boundary with Ridgewood adjacent, the outbuilding would retain a separation distance of approximately 6.4m from this neighbouring property (No.2 Butts Hill Road) sufficiently mitigating any potential overbearing impact. Moreover, due to the

existing relationship and the siting of the proposal, any potential overbearing impact would be limited to a small portion of the neighbouring garden.

The proposed outbuilding's siting due west of Ridgewood would mean that this neighbouring property would also receive full sunlight aside from at the end of the day when a degree of overshadowing may occur. However, this would not be so significant as to unduly impact on the residential amenities of this neighbouring property such that it would warrant refusal of this application. Therefore, the proposal would not introduce any adverse harm on the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of overbearing or loss of light impact.

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. As discussed above, mature trees adjacent to the site's northern boundary contribute significantly to the landscape character.

The Council's Landscape and Trees Officer has reviewed the submitted Tree Survey and raised no concerns with the recommended mitigations to protect the adjacent trees during and after the development, subject to a full Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) being agreed with the council prior to commencement. The applicant has agreed to this requirement being conditioned.

Subject to the AMS being agreed prior to commencement, the proposal would result in no harm to the adjacent mature trees and retain the site's contributions to green infrastructure and local character in accordance with MDD Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

Subject to conditions, the application is acceptable and is therefore 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, 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:	7 January 2025
Earliest date for decision:	19 November 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	08/01/25