

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252691
Site Address:	Moyle House, Fleet Hill, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4LJ
Expiry Date:	27 January 2026
Site Visit Date:	12 December 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a First floor front extension. Two storey side extension. Two storey side rear extension following conversion of garage to create habitable accommodation. Changes to fenestration to include 2no. Juliet balconies. Raising of the roof to create more space on the first floor. Two storey rear extension to include rooflights. Plus erection of detached double garage following demolition of existing.	

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 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 - Countryside
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 CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM5 - Protection of the Countryside
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

	Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan
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PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
241939	Householder application for proposed erection of a single storey rear extension	Approval – 03/09/2024
170984	Householder application for the proposed erection of a main entrance gate and 2nd exit gate.	Approval - 25/05/2017
981398	Proposed Two Storey Side Extension To Dwelling And Attached Double Garage	Approval - 27/03/1998

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage – No objection subject to conditions
WBC CIL – Advice provided
WBC Ecology – No objection subject to conditions.

External

N/A

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection raised by Finchampstead Parish Council
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	One letter of objection and two letters of support have been received by residents. The letter of objection raises the following concerns: • Harm to neighbouring amenities with respect to overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing. • Harm to the character and appearance of the area by virtue of bulk and mass.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site, Moyle House, is a large, formerly extended detached dwelling on a large plot along Fleet Hill. The dwelling is set back from the road, with two entrance gates and is screened by substantial front mature tree planting making it barely visible from the road.

The site is located within the defined countryside and circa 1.1km from the settlement limits of Finchampstead located to the north-east. The site also is located close to

Wokingham's administrative southern boundary at a distance of circa 382 metres.

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 the countryside outside any defined settlement boundary and therefore any form of development will only be acceptable when it is in accordance with the principles stated in Core Strategy/ Local Plan and subject to the proposal's impact on countryside, character of the place and amenity of the neighbouring properties.

Policy CP11 of core strategy provides guidelines for developments within countryside and states that development outside defined settlement boundaries will be strictly controlled. Where acceptable in principle the countryside can accommodate some forms of development without detriment provided that the development type, form and design are sensitive to the location. Policy CP11 states that in order to protect the separate identities of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside development limits will not normally be permitted except where:

1. It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the Borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
2. It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
3. It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvements; or
4. In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;
5. In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:
 - i. Bring about environmental improvements
 - ii. Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building
6. Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building;
7. Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

The proposal seeks permission for the erection of a substantial front, side and rear extension as well as the erection of a detached garage. The proposed built form whilst notable in scale is visually subservient to the existing executive dwelling and is located within the existing residential curtilage.

The proposal does not result in excessive expansion of residential use and keeps built form relatively tight, centrally located in the site. It is appreciated that the

proposed extension in combination with historic extensions have notably increased the size of the original dwelling, however considering the size of the plot, these are not considered to be inappropriate in the site's context which is the relevant test under CP11(4). As such, the extensions proposed alongside the erection of a detached garage is considered to comply with part 4 of CP11. Accordingly, the principle of development is acceptable.

Character of the Area:

Core strategy policy CP3 provides general guidance for all developments, with the primary remit 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.

The proposed development does lead to an increase in the level of built form compared to the existing as detailed above at circa 60% volume increase. This said, the relative increases in footprint and relatively limited and reflect the site's large plot and proportionate coverage (circa 436sqm main dwelling on a 7812sqm plot) at 5.5% plot coverage.

In terms of visual appearance, the proposed extensions are of satisfactory design and visually enhance the late 1990's additions to the dwelling approved under 981398. They do not appear out of keeping with the existing dwelling and thus do not stand contrary to the Development Plan.

Turning to the proposed detached garage, it is noted that this is sited forward of the front facing building line which stands contrary to the Borough Design Guide. However, given the scale of the plot frontage and lack of visibility from the street scene, this feature is not uncommon in connection with a large executive home. Accordingly, whilst the technical breach is acknowledged, no harm arises from its position forward of the dwelling.

In terms of height, the proposed extension largely follows the existing ridge heights compared to the existing dwelling which is acceptable. Though there are minor deviations from this (circa 0.2 metre raise centrally), they are not considered substantial, nor would warrant objection on character grounds due to the relatively isolated nature of the application site which is not readily visible from public viewpoints.

The proposed materials are to match the existing as indicated within the submitted application form. This will allow the extensions to assimilate in with the surrounding design of the existing dwelling. The material schedule is secured via condition.

It is appreciated that the dwelling is well set back from Fleet Hill, and given the presence of boundary treatment and vegetation would have limited to no visibility from the street scene. Accordingly, the proposed extensions though notable in scale would not be obtrusive in the context of the street scene (characterised by large detached dwellings) and thus not stand contrary to CP1 or CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The site is located near the centre of a large plot, with neighbouring properties located a significant distance away from the application site. Due to the condensed package of built form not dissimilar from the existing, the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing grounds. Further, it is noted that the site's established landscape features are otherwise considered to screen the property which further lessens even the perceived impact on neighbouring amenity.

The proposed extension retains significant separation distance between the application site and adjoining neighbours. Whilst concerns are noted from 1no. resident objection with respect to the occupiers of Stowe House, the flank-to-flank separation distance remains at circa 29 metres which is over 30x the Borough Design Guide recommendation. Whilst limited intervisibility may continue to occur from the proposed side windows, this is no more detrimental than existing and does not equate to harm warranting refusal.

It is appreciated that the proposal will result in built form that is closer to the eastern boundary, however, when applying a 45 degree test in plan form the proposed extensions will not result in the loss of light to any neighbouring habitable windows.

Given the reasons above, the proposal would not give rise to any harmful overlooking, overbearing or loss of light.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposals retains significant space for parking, both at the front of the dwelling and within the proposed detached garage, which is sufficient to cater for the intended users of the dwelling and in accordance with Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan. Further access arrangements and visibility splays are not being amended as a part of this application. Accordingly the proposal is acceptable on highway safety grounds.

In terms of cycle parking, no details have been submitted to this effect, however, the application site retains ample space and external storage areas that would be sufficient for the storage of bicycles. No objections are raised in this respect.

Amenity Space:

The property has an extensive garden and associated land with it, allowing it to exceed the 11m of garden amenity space recommended within the Wokingham Borough Design Guide.

Flooding and Drainage:

The development is in Flood zone 1 and in an area low risk from surface water flooding according to the EA mapping.

Upon consultation, WBC Drainage outlined that there will be increase in impermeable

area. Whilst this is correct in part, and a surface water drainage strategy was not submitted in support of the application, given the extent of hard surfacing on site as well as the existing built form, a condition requiring drainage details would not meet the 6 tests for a condition outlined within the planning practice guidance and NPPF (unreasonable). Accordingly, one is not pursued.

Landscape and Trees:

No landscape features are proposed to be removed as a part of this development bar one small tree as reported within the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment, and views of the site from the wider landscape would remain buffered and screened by existing vegetation.

Alongside the removal of one small tree of moderate quality, the AIA reports that one tree requires pruning for access. There is to be no new construction in tree root protection areas (RPA) of trees to be retained.

The submitted AIA notes that the trees that may be vulnerable to harm from construction operations, materials storage and movement of plant and machinery can be protected from harm by robust physical protection measures. Accordingly, a condition is appended to the permission to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures outlined within the AIA.

With the above in mind, the proposal does not stand contrary to CC03 or TB21 of the MDD Local Plan.

Ecology:

All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Under this legislation it is an offence to deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence for derogation from the regulations from Natural England in England. A bat roost is interpreted as “any structure or place used for shelter or protection” whether or not bats are present at the time.

The application site is located within an area outlined as potentially suitable for bat roosts. The application is accompanied by a Stage 1 and 2 Bat Survey.

The submitted stage 1 bat survey outlined that there were no signs of historic bat activity in the house loft. However, it did mention that there are gaps into the undertile spaces which crevice roosting bats could exploit. Therefore, the structure has low potential, and a Phase 2 bat survey is required.

The submitted Stage 2 survey outlined that over three days of surveying a total of five Common pipistrelles day roosts were present with a peak count of four from the west hip area on 29th August.

To manage the above, the applicant has submitted a bat mitigation strategy which outlines the need for a Natural England license. This report further advises the

creation of new roosts in the form of bat boxes prior to any building works, provision of a tool box protection talk to any employees on site, hand removal of tiles and all roof works to proceed under ecological supervision. Further to consultation, WBC Ecology outlined that it is not unlikely that an EPS license would be granted for the works proposed. Accordingly, evidence of receipt of the Natural England license is secured by planning condition.

Furthermore, considering the submitted survey reports outlined the presence of numerous foraging bats utilising a dark corridor, an ecological lighting condition has been appended to the decision, requiring all lighting to be carried out in accordance with the Natural England Licence (unless otherwise approved by the LPA). Subject to the above, WBC Ecology raises no objections to the proposal.

Conclusion:

Overall, with the above in mind, the proposal is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approval subject to conditions
Date:	22 January 2026
Earliest date for decision:	16 December 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
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Date:	23.01.2026
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PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Affordable Housing Thresholds

Scale and Location of Development Proposals

Thames Basin Heath SPA Mitigation Zones

Areas of Search for Sand and Gravel

Mineral Safeguarding Areas

Major Nuclear Sites Consultation Zone

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Farnborough Consultation Zone

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Gatwick Consultation Zone

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Heathrow Consultation Zone

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Odiham Consultation Zone

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability

Local Wildlife Sites Consultation Zone

SSSI Impact Risk Zones

Potentially Contaminated Land Zones

Water Utility Consultation Zones

Landscape Character Assessment 2019