

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242558
Site Address:	12 Culver Lane, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 1DS
Expiry Date:	14 February 2025
Site Visit Date:	31 January 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed a replacement two-storey dwelling following demolition of the existing dwelling.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Water Utility Consultation Zones
Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Borough Parishes
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Historic Flooding Points Consultation Zone
JCEB Mineral Safeguarding Areas

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
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC07 – Parking
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
214084	Householder application for the proposed development for a single storey mono pitched	Application withdrawn – 15 th

	roof to lean on existing games room (retrospective).	February 2022.
220567	Householder application for the single storey rear detached building (Retrospective).	Refused- 26th April 2022.
242319	Pre-application advice for proposed side and rear extensions to existing bungalow, and addition of one floor to create a two-storey dwelling with additional habitable loft space.	Replied – 27 th September 2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Highways: Request further information

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Earley Town Council: Object The application is for what is to all intents and purposes a new dwelling and not an extension, by virtue of fact and degree of demolition, and the application should be re-submitted as a new dwelling By virtue of its inappropriate built form, mass, height and character, with the ridge height being excessively higher than the adjacent dwellings and that it closes the gap to the boundary with No.14 to less than the 1m at first floor, as recommended in Sections R18 and R23 of Borough Design Guide and as supported by Policy CP3. The bedrooms formed in the proposed attic space are sub-standard in terms of usable floor area, due to ceiling heights within the rooms, to the detriment of the amenity of future occupiers and are not compliant with the Nationally Described Space Standards, as supported by Policy TB07. The proposed roof lights are so low to the floor in the attic rooms as to present views downward into the adjacent properties, to the detriment of their privacy and amenity, contrary to Policy CP3. Officer response: Now submitted as a full application rather than householder due to the extent of demolitions at the request of the validation team and the wording to describe the works agreed prior to validation
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	Separation distance addressed in report. The bedrooms in the loft spaces are set so that in the main there is in excess of 1.5m height rising to over 2.1m as identified on the loft floor plan, with a flat ceiling area of 2.3m, all of which is not untypical of rooms in a loft space utilising the natural slope of the roof. The floor area for each of the rooms is in excess of 17.0m² in the front loft room measured in line with RICS rules at a height of 1.5m rising to 2.3m, which has a depth of 2.1m and a width of 8.4m and then over 22.0m² for the rear room, with a width of 3.0m and depth of 5.7m at the shortest point measured in the same way for the rear room. The roof windows raised so that the opening section would lie above 1.7m from the finished floor, which would then meet policy.
Ward Member(s)	Councillor Stephen Newton: Object Maintaining a mix of properties in the community Whilst ostensibly remaining a 2-floor height property, the plans include enabling occupation of the third floor which would facilitate substantial occupation as well as creating a substantial and out of keeping property with 6 bedrooms. The proposed change from hipped style roof to gable end is out of keeping with the adjacent properties and change the character of the area. Parking concerns Officer response: 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 increase in height from the existing bungalow but it would be similar in scale to other dwellings in the street scene. Therefore, it is considered the proposal does not cause an unacceptable harmful impact to the character or quality of the local area. Whilst the first-floor element of the extension includes the creation of additional first floor habitable accommodation, 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 no.10 and no.14 are two storey dwellings as well as most of the dwelling along Culver Lane. The design of the proposal takes inspiration from no.14, thus integrating into the street scene. The bungalow as it exists is sat between two storey dwellings and is not therefore out of place and allows the family to continue to live in the same location without having to move with their extended family. The proposal is in line with the current relaxed rules and added incentives to add vertical extensions to dwellings and meets also the “Design for Living” requirements where existing dwellings are able to be altered and extended for the natural growth of family units. WBC Highways raised no concerns and complied with parking standards.
Neighbours	14 Culver Lane: Location of the wall and if the path will remain. Marked boundary Officer response: The flank wall would be 0.70m from the shared boundary and the path will remain but smaller, with enough access to back garden of no.12. Party wall act informative will be included within the decision notice The plans show where the fence line would be. Does not need to include the rear outbuilding as not part of the application.
Other: ACER Mr William Luck	Objects: Curtilage query/ redline location plan Scale, Build Form and impact upon character of the area. Impact upon neighbouring amenity Distance from boundary HMO Parking Officer response: No concerns with regards to curtilage or redline on location plan The width of the building is considerably smaller than the

	adjacent building at No 10, and No 10 has a crown roof for when they extended their property. Both Nos 10 and 16 are both already two storey dwellings. The applicants have sought a look and design of their eventual building to not have hipped roof designs, as then they can balance the entrance and porch design, in the manner they are seeking. There are good variety of house designs already in Culver Lane, and albeit the majority are of a hipped roof design, there are others that have a standard gable arrangement. The height of the application property is likely to be marginally taller than the adjacent dwellings, but this is not out of the ordinary with the number of different styles in Culver Lane. Impact upon neighbouring amenity & distance from boundary addressed in report. The agent has confirmed the application is for improved accommodation for the owner and their family for a private dwelling and not for an HMO and should not be considered for any other use. The use of the Word "Guest" in this case is in reference to visitors and not permanent residents. The applicants use the phrase as a mark of respect to anyone other than a relative that visits their home, and also where there is the need also to separate male and female visitors due to required formalities. WBC are satisfied that the proposal is for a dwelling with no change of use involved. WBC Highways raised no concerns and complied with parking standards.
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APPRAISAL

Site Description: The application site is within the major settlement area of Earley. From the street scene, dwellings are set back from the frontage by appreciable front driveways and soft landscaping features. As a result, despite being heavily built up, there is a strong sense of openness and legibility to the surrounding area. Dwellings on Culver Lane mostly consist of bungalows and two-storey detached properties that are located on large plots with appreciable garden depths.

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.

The proposal would utilise good architectural features including a pitched gable roof form. There is a variation of property styles in the area, but they generally conform to a mid-twenty century suburban vernacular and the proposed style would broadly be in keeping with the street scene, the design of the proposal takes inspiration from no.14. Whilst the height of the application property is likely to be marginally taller than the adjacent dwellings, but this is not out of the ordinary with the number of different styles in Culver Lane. The dwelling maintains an appropriate building line and roof height, ensuring it does not appear overly dominant or out of place within the existing context.

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.10 and no.14 are two storey dwellings.

The rear element pitched roof is stepped down from the main ridge and approx. 6.33m in depth. The roof form would be considered to be coherent and well-designed approach that influences and responds to the building. Furthermore, this would be largely indiscernible and not visible from the public domain. Hence, it 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 Culver Lane, meaning that the proposal would not negatively harm the street scene. The proposal meets the recommendations of the Borough Design Guide and is in line with policy CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy.

The inclusion of 3 roof lights to the front, 1 on each side and 2 to the rear are minor additions and would not harm the street scene. Along Culver Lane, there are plenty of examples of roof lights on the front elevation so would not harm the street scene.

Materials to be used would be consistent with the overall character of the area and in keeping with the existing dwelling materials including and would consist of part facing brickwork and part render finish walls, profiled concrete roof tiles with mineral felt to new flat roof areas and white UPVC windows and doors to match.

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/Separation Distance: As part of the two-storey dwelling, first floor windows would be added at the front of the property. Whilst the proposed window would face another property, it is noted that Culver Lane, a public road, is located adjacent to the site. As such, the proposal would not result in a greater overlooking impact into residential properties than is currently present as the window at the front of the extension would overlook the street scene and therefore no harmful impact would occur.

All ground floor side windows would be screened by the existing side boundaries, thus preventing any overlooking. All first-floor and loft side windows are for non-habitable rooms (e.g en-suites, shower room and landing) and would be obscured glazed, thus no harmful 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 first-floor rear extension and its oblique angle/view of no.10 & no.14 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 BDG states the minimum separation distance from flank wall to boundary is 1m. The separation distance from 14 Culver Lane is over 1m, thus complying with the BDG. The separation distance from 10 Culver Lane is less than 1m, thus not complying with BDG. However, given the separation distance from flank wall to flank wall would be greater than 1m, whilst it would not result in harm to neighbouring amenities despite not being completely in accordance with the Borough Design Guide.

The Borough design Guide states the minimum separation distance for rear of dwelling to flank wall is 12m. The separation distance between the rear of 12 Culver Lane and 1 Anderson Avenue is approx. 23m, thus complying with the BDG.

The inclusion of the roof lights would not result in harmful overlooking.

Loss of Light: As shown on plan CL12:005, the proposal complies with the 45 degree line loss of light guidance within BRE regulations, thus not resulting 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.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The proposal will result in additional habitable rooms. There is existing parking for three vehicles and this level of parking meets WBC parking standards for the proposed development.

The highways officer requested further information in relation to cycle storage, however given the nature of the application such requested is deemed not necessary.

Flooding and Drainage: The application site is sited within flood zone 1 and therefore would be no significant flooding issues. The comments from drainage have been taken into consideration, however due to the scale of the scheme the provision of a drainage system is not required.

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

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:	25 February 2025
Earliest date for decision:	17 December 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	27.02.2025