

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242712
Site Address:	Little Gables, Sindlesham Road, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG2 9QE
Expiry Date:	21 November 2025
Site Visit Date:	17 December 2024
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a new front porch, single storey front/side extension and two first floor rear extensions with changes to existing fenestrations.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Conservation Area
Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
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
Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones
Historic Flooding Points Consultation Zone
JCEB Mineral Safeguarding Areas
Local Plan Update Submitted Sites
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone Minor

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 CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document Arborfield and Newland Village Design Statement

	Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan
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PLANNING HISTORY- No relevant planning history

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Highways: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Built Heritage Officer: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Ecology: No objection subject to conditions

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Arborfield & Newland Parish Council: No objections
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

Two storey semi-detached dwelling in the countryside. The property is an attractive 19th century cottage, along with the attached neighbour of Lychgate Cottage. It is located within the heart of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area.

Proposal:

This application proposes the erection of a:

- front porch,
 - single storey front/side extension and
 - two first floor rear extensions
- alongside changes to existing fenestrations.

Amended drawings were received following comments from consultees on Built Heritage. The alterations included changes to fenestration and change in roof form to hipped roof with gable end as part of the two first floor side/rear extensions to show that it is subservient to the original house

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.

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.

The site is located outside of settlement limits and in designated countryside, and is therefore subject to policy CP11 of the Core Strategy, which seeks to maintain the high quality of the rural environments as well as to protect the separate identity of settlements. Policy CP11 states, that that proposals outside of development limits are not normally permitted where they result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.

Whilst there will be further spread into the site because of the proposal, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of mass and scale with a modest increase to the existing footprint. The development will appear proportionate to the size of this large site. As such, it would not result in any significant encroachment upon open countryside and therefore would be considered acceptable.

Character of the Area:

The Borough Design Guide states *“porches should generally project less than 2m forward of the building line”*. The front porch would project approx. 0.95m forward of the building line, thus complying with the BDG. The front porch would be a modest addition which would not harm the street scene.

The BDG states *“side extensions should not generally project forward of the building line on the street frontage(s)”* and *“a gap should be retained between the building and site boundary and this should be a minimum of 1m in width”*. The single storey side extension would not project forward of the building line and be more than 1m from the site boundary, thus complying with the BDG. The single storey side extension would be a modest addition which would not harm the street scene. Furthermore, given the nature of the application site, with significant natural screening to the front and significant set back from the road such addition would not be visible from the street scene and would not harm the character of the area.



Figure 1- Front of Little Gables

R23 of the BDG requires extensions to be stepped down from the main ridge and rear extensions to be limited to 4m in depth. It also seeks to achieve a coherent and well-designed approach that influences and responds to the original building. The pitched roof of the two first floor rear extensions would be stepped down from the main ridge and depth greater than 4m, which does not comply with the BDG.

The proposed roof form would be coherent and well-designed approach that influences and responds to the original building given the pitch roof elements of the existing dwelling and the host property has a very spacious garden in order to accommodate for such sized extension. Furthermore, this would be largely indiscernible and only visible in passing from the public domain. Hence, it would not have an adverse impact on the character of the host property or surrounding area. Whilst the interpretation of the original dwelling is largely lost, this is not reason for refusal of the application in itself.

The new windows would be similar to the existing in size and proportions of current ground floor window along Sindlesham Road, 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.

Further assessment is included in the heritage section of this report.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking: The addition of one ground floor window to the front would not result in harmful overlooking given it would be screened by the existing hedging and would overlook onto a road (see figure 1).

The additional windows on the side elevation would overlook onto a field, thus no harmful overlooking.

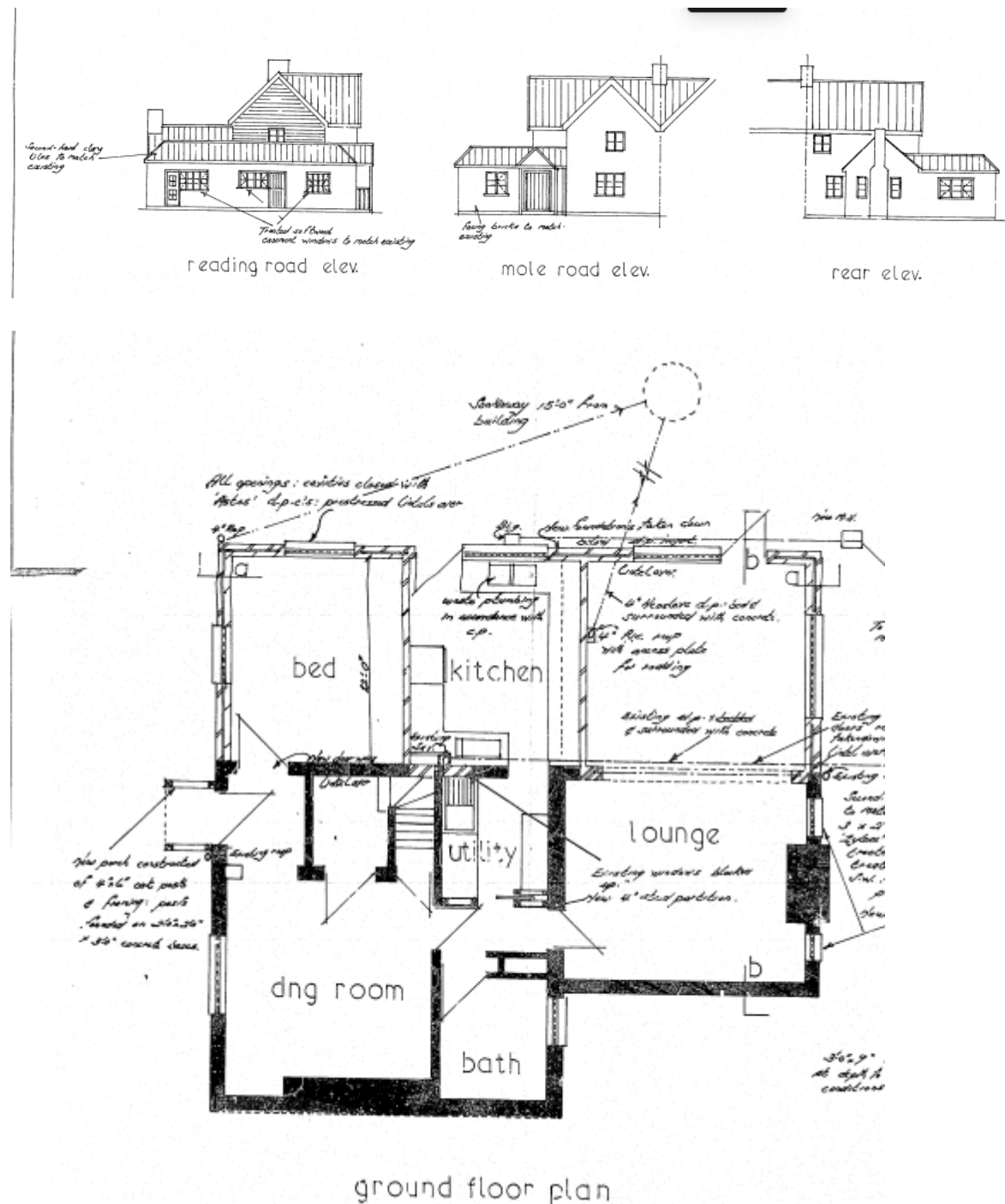
The addition on one ground floor window to the rear would not result in harmful overlooking.

The first-floor bathroom window and en-suite 1 window in the side elevation and first

floor rear window for en-suite 1 will be conditioned to be obscured glazed.

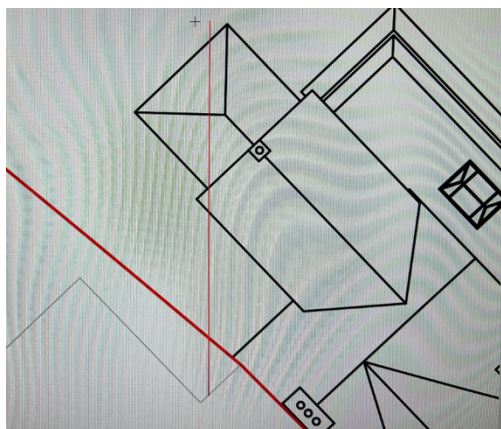
Loss of Light: The first-floor extension would project beyond Lych Gate Cottages rear building line by approx. 3.10m. Given the extension would be two storey and close to the boundary, there is potential loss of light to the rear first floor habitable room.

With regards to the ground floor windows, as shown on plan 14779 (see floor plan below), the closest ground floor opening would be for a bathroom which is classed as a non-habitable rooms, thus no loss of light concerns given its status.

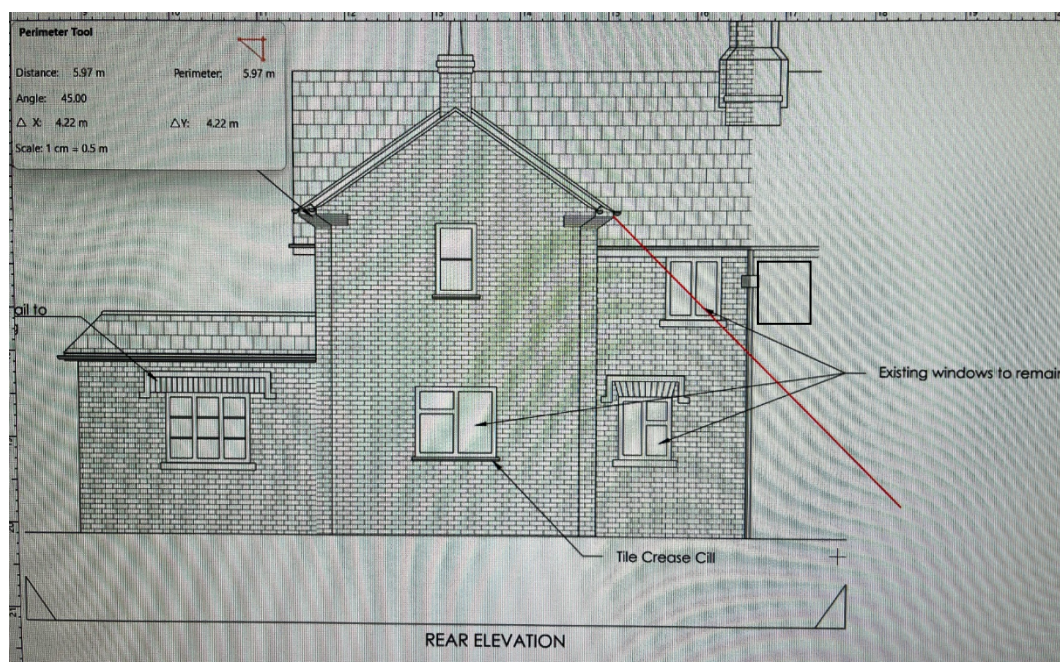


The other ground floor window would be significantly away from the extension and would not result in harmful loss of light.

With regards to the first floor window, when a 45 degree line is drawn from the centre of Lych Gate Cottage first floor rear window, the proposal would not comply with the 45* rule in plan form (see below).



Whilst it would fail in plan form, it would comply in elevation form (see below), thus no significant loss of light will occur. The proposal would need to fail in both plan and elevation form in order to warrant refusal.



Therefore, it is not considered to be a reasonable reason to refuse the scheme given its compliance with local policy in other respects and given the neighbouring property would still have adequate access to natural light.

Overbearing: The first-floor rear extensions would be set off from the boundary and neighbouring dwelling Lych Gate Cottage by over 2.50m, thus complying with the BDG separation distance and allowing for adequate breathing spaces between the properties.

The proposal would be of similar height to the neighbouring dwelling, with the first-floor extension not increasing beyond the highest point of the roof and the proposal would not appear physically overbearing or oppressive to neighbours such that it would be significantly detrimental to their amenities.

The overall scale and massing of the extension is proportionate to the host property and consistent with typical residential extensions in the surrounding area. It does not introduce an excessive height, depth, or bulk that would dominate neighbouring outlooks.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal will not result in any additional habitable rooms.

The front extension will reduce the extent of the existing driveway. Although the retained level of parking is considered acceptable, a turning area has been provided (240611-005 Rev A & 240611-008 Rev A), and the officer raised no objection subject to a parking and turning condition.

This is to ensure there is sufficient space for vehicles to turn within the site, so as to enter and leave the site in forward gear on/off B3030 Sindlesham Road.

Flooding and Drainage:

The existing dwelling and associated works 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 surface water run off strategy is not required.

Ecology:

The officer has read the Bat Survey (GS Ecology, Ref ECO3668b, 26 August 2025) and reviewed the revised plans and elevations submitted in support of the application.

All species of British bat 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 house has numerous features potentially suitable for use by roosting bats including:

- Numerous gaps under raised roof tiles on the rear elevation
- Gap between verge tiles and barge board at both front and side gable ends
- Small gaps under raised and slipped roof tiles on the rear single storey section.

The void below the rear roof was inaccessible to the Ecologist. The habitats

surrounding were predominantly 'high' suitability for commuting and foraging bats.

Bat emergence surveys were completed on 15 May, 19 June and 24 July 2025. A single Common pipistrelle bat emerged from under a roof tile of the southeaster front elevation of the house.

The WBC ecologist agrees with the assessment that the house has 'high' potential to host a bat roost. The council's officer is satisfied that the survey effort and methodology are adequate. According to the applicant's Ecologist the front of the house will not be directly affected by the proposed works, and they conclude it is unlikely that the roost will be disturbed by the proposal. Provided the front of the main house roof is not impacted, the council officer supports the applicant's Ecologist's conclusion that a derogation licence is not currently required for the development proposed. The council officer agrees that locations of day roosts are transient, and it is possible that bats will utilise the other numerous potential roosting features around the building, depending on time of year and environmental factors. It is therefore necessary to secure the recommended non-licensed method statement by condition including toolbox talks, direct ecological supervision, bat-safe roofing membrane, limits to external lighting.

According to the application form states no trees or hedges on site or within falling distance and no trees or hedges have to be removed to facilitate the development. However, neither the Location Plan, Bat Survey, nor the Site Plan provide details of the existing boundaries or hedges and trees on the site to be retained or protected. In particular those which may constrain access, deliveries, site welfare, storage, plant and vehicle parking. The officer is concerned that the Proposed Block Plan and swept path appears to propose widening of the narrow drive and therefore hedgerow removal which has not been assessed. The condition relating to the retention of trees and shrubs has been included, however the condition protection of trees is deemed excessive in such case and has not been included.

Built Heritage:

The application proposes the demolition of elements of Little Gables – an attractive 19th century cottage, along with the attached neighbour of Lychgate Cottage - with the subsequent construction of new single and two-storey additions. Little Gables is located within the heart of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area, sited just to the north-west of the village green and former duck pond. The cottages feature notably in the Conservation Area Appraisal and by virtue of their age, architectural and historic interest, as well as the positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area, Little Gables/Lychgate Cottage are identified as non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs).

The amended scheme has sought to address initial concerns over the proposal relating to in terms of design and fenestration. The large flat/crown roofed addition of the first-floor side/rear extension was not ideal in the context and the was changed to hipped roof with gable end and increase in traditional detailing such as; brick headers, stone cills and flemish bond brickwork. Such fenestration welcomed. Given the extant mis-matching bricks, it is important new materials seek to best match the existing. As with all built elements in the historic environment, detailing and the quality

of the architectural elements is important to preserving the character and appearance of the heritage assets.

Further to the amended proposals, no objection is raised from the Built Heritage Officer.

Amenity Space:

The proposal reduces the amount of amenity space available to the property, but would still be more than 11m in depth, thus complying with the BDG.

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:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	21 November 2025
Earliest date for decision:	5 January 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	21.11.2025