

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252036
Site Address:	23 Erleigh Court Drive, Earley, Wokingham
Expiry Date:	21/10/2025
Site Visit Date:	05/09/2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed conversion of existing garage to create habitable accommodation, along with changes to fenestration.	

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
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC07 – Parking
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
211003	Application for works to protected tree(s) TPO 1054/2003, T1	Tree Consent – 21/05/2021

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal
The Highways Authority has raised no objection to the proposal, subject to the following conditions: Ancillary Use Restriction: The converted accommodation shall remain ancillary to the main dwelling and shall not be sold, leased, or otherwise disposed of separately. Reason: In the interest of highway safety and to ensure that adequate parking provision is maintained.

• Cycle Parking (Condition CF9): Prior to occupation, details of secure and covered cycle parking are to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To encourage sustainable modes of transport in line with national and local policy.
External
No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	Earley Town Council raises no objection, subject to the imposition of a condition restricting the garage conversion from being used as a separate unit of accommodation from fee-paying occupants. This condition is sought to ensure that adequate parking provision is maintained and to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties, in accordance with Policies CC07 and CP3 of the Local Plan.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	Mrs Nicola Ball - 19b Erleigh Court Drive One letter of objection was received from a neighbouring property. The key concerns raised were as follows: • Parking Provision: The objector described the property as having “significant parking constraints,” stating that two “disused vehicles” occupy the driveway and limit usable space. However, the driveway is physically capable of accommodating three vehicles, which meets Wokingham Borough Council’s adopted parking standards. The status of vehicles on private land is not a material planning consideration, and no weight has been given to this point. • Highway Safety and Access: Concern was raised about “cars parking near the junction” between No. 17 and 21, reducing visibility and creating turning difficulties. These concerns were noted and considered as part of the Highways consultation. The Highways Authority has raised no objection, subject to conditions. • Potential for Intensification / Future HMO Use: The objector noted that the layout of the conversion may “effectively create a separate annexe”, raising concerns that it could become a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), leading to increased occupancy, noise, waste, and pressure on local services. • Property Maintenance and Tree Management: The objection also referenced the garden being “completely overgrown”, with “offshoots from a protected tree” allegedly encroaching onto neighbouring land. While these concerns are noted, matters of garden condition and vegetation

	management are not material planning considerations and have played no part in the assessment of this application.
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APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application relates to a detached, red-brick two-storey dwelling located in Earley, Wokingham. The property is situated within a residential street where there is no consistent street scene, with dwellings varying in style and layout.

The dwelling benefits from a driveway capable of accommodating three vehicles. The existing garage is attached to the main house and fronts onto the street. There is also an existing secondary front entrance adjacent to the garage door, which provides separate access to the part of the dwelling proposed for conversion.

Above the garage are two existing bedrooms accessed internally from the main house. Although the front bedroom has previously been used as a storage, both rooms are part of the original dwelling and are not separate units. These bedrooms share access via two staircases — one internal staircase connecting to the main house and another staircase within the garage space itself.

This application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the existing garage into habitable accommodation, including changes to fenestration. The works involve the removal of the garage door and the insertion of a new front-facing window and matching brickwork to integrate with the existing elevation. The conversion includes a bedroom, bathroom, and kitchenette, intended for use by an elderly relative with specific health needs, but retains an internal door connecting it to the main house.

Given the existing bedrooms above and the shared internal staircases, the conversion is clearly ancillary to the main dwelling and does not create a separate or new dwelling.

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 of Earley 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:

CP1 of the Core Strategy states that the proposed external alterations should maintain the high quality of the environment.

CP3 of the Core Strategy states that the proposed external alterations should be of appropriate scale, mass, bulk, height, materials and of high-quality design.

The site is located within a residential street characterised by a varied architectural character. There is no consistent street scene, with dwellings differing in design, materials, and frontage treatments. Properties are predominantly detached and two-storey, and while red brick is a common material, there is a mix of detailing, fenestration styles, and roof forms across the street.

There are no clearly established patterns of garage conversions or uniformity in front elevations. As such, the proposed fenestration changes — including the replacement of the garage door with a white uPVC window and brick infill to match the existing— are considered modest in scale and visually consistent with the materials and detailing of the host dwelling.

The external alterations are visible from the street but are not considered intrusive or out of keeping with the surrounding area. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of its design, materials, and visual impact, and complies with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and the Wokingham Borough Design Guide (BDG).

Neighbouring Amenity:*Overlooking:*

The proposal includes the replacement of the existing garage door with a front-facing ground floor window, and the retention of an existing front-facing secondary entrance door, which already provides independent access to this part of the dwelling. No new side or rear-facing openings are proposed.

Both the proposed window and the secondary door face directly onto the public street and do not overlook any private amenity space. Ground floor front-facing windows are a standard feature of residential development and do not typically result in harmful overlooking.

Given that all changes are at ground floor level and directed toward the public realm, the proposal is not considered to give rise to any loss of privacy for neighbouring properties. The development is therefore compliant with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and the Wokingham Borough Design Guide in relation to overlooking and residential amenity.

Loss of Light and Overbearing:

The proposal involves no change to the height, footprint, or built form of the dwelling. As the works are contained within the existing garage structure, there will be no impact

on daylight, sunlight, or outlook for neighbouring properties. The development does not result in any overbearing effect and complies with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Residential Amenity Space:

The proposal involves internal alterations and minor external changes at ground floor level. It does not result in any increase in built form, and there are no new openings that would impact privacy. The accommodation remains ancillary to the main dwelling and is to be used by a family member. As such, the proposal does not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity in terms of noise, privacy, or overdevelopment, in accordance with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Ancillary Use:

The proposed garage conversion is intended to provide ancillary accommodation for a sick, elderly family member and is not designed or capable of functioning as an independent or self-contained dwelling. The converted space will include a bedroom, bathroom, and kitchenette, but will remain physically and functionally connected to the main house via an internal door. Importantly, access to the rear garden is only possible through the converted area, meaning that the main household must pass through this space to reach the garden. This further reinforces the subservient and ancillary relationship of the converted area to the principal dwelling. In addition, the converted space lacks essential facilities such as a dedicated dining area and relies on the main dwelling for full functionality. Accordingly, the proposal constitutes ancillary accommodation within a single planning unit and does not result in the creation of a separate or independent residential unit.

To ensure the converted accommodation remains ancillary to the main dwelling and to prevent the creation of a separate planning unit, it is appropriate for a planning condition to be imposed restricting the annexe from being sold, leased, or disposed of separately. This is necessary to maintain the residential character of the area, to avoid the intensification of use that could arise from independent occupation, and to ensure there is no adverse impact on access, parking provision, or highway safety. The condition reflects standard practice in such cases and aligns with local and national planning policy aimed at managing ancillary accommodation appropriately.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal does not involve any change to existing access arrangements.

Although the garage is proposed to be converted, it is not currently used for parking and does not meet modern parking standards. The driveway can accommodate three vehicles, which meets the requirements set out in the Wokingham Borough Design Guide (BDG) for a dwelling of this size.

The Highways Authority has raised no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions ensuring the accommodation remains ancillary and that cycle parking is secured. As such, the development is considered acceptable in terms of highway safety and parking provision, in accordance with Policies CP6 and CC07 of the Local Plan.

Conclusion:

The proposed development seeks permission for the conversion of an existing garage to habitable accommodation, including minor external alterations to the front elevation. The works are modest in scale, use materials in keeping with the host dwelling, and are not out of character within a street that lacks uniformity.

The converted space is to remain ancillary to the main dwelling and is intended for use by a family member. The development does not result in any harm to the character of the area, residential amenity, or highway safety.

Subject to conditions securing its ancillary use and cycle parking provision, the proposal is considered to comply with relevant local and national planning policies. Approval is therefore recommended.

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.

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.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approved
Date:	
Earliest date for decision:	18/09/2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
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Date:	09.10.2025
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PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Mineral Safeguarding Areas

- ***Soft sand - Construction sand: Palaeogene: Thanet Sand Formation, Lambeth Group, Harwic Formation, London Clay Formation***

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water

- ***Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones***

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones

- ***Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone***

Water Utility Consultation Zones

Tree Preservation Orders Served or Confirmed

- ***TPO-1054-2003***

Ward - Maiden Erlegh & Whitegates Ward

Parish – Earley CP