

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	243009
Site Address:	26 Somerton Gardens, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 5XG
Expiry Date:	28 January 2025
Site Visit Date:	18 December 2024
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed part conversion of the garage to habitable accommodation, plus changes to fenestration.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Major Development Location
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Nuclear Consultation Zone
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Safety Hazard Areas MAH Pipelines

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 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC07 – Parking TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
242453	Application for certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension with associated changes to fenestration.	Approved – 30/10/2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal
WBC Highways – Requested Further Information.

WBC CIL –Development is not CIL liable.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection from Early Town Council
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is a detached dwelling located on the eastern side of Somerton Gardens. The site is located on a bend of the road meaning it does not have an immediate neighbour to the south. The property has a double attached garage that is set substantially far back from the front elevation of the main house. The front of the garage would sit in line with the rear elevation of the main house.

There are examples of other properties in the vicinity that have garages that are set back, similar to the application site. The roof form of these garages on surrounding plots varies. In the case of the application site, the garage has light brown brick work with dark brown tiles forming a pitched roof. The garage has the same brick work and tiles for roof with light red colour manual retracting doors. There is some simple vegetation present the front garden.

Proposal:

Householder application for the proposed part conversion of the garage to habitable accommodation, plus changes to fenestration. The partial garage conversion is proposed to be used as a utility room.

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.

Design/character of the Area:

Policy CP3 General Principles for Development in the core strategy plan states in point (a) that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an

appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design.

The Borough Design Guide does not specifically refer to part garage conversions. However, it does refer to garages and parking in a general aspect and how they should be positioned. More specifically, it states that

“Where a garage is to be converted into a room, then the parking space will need to be replaced”.

The above will be discussed in the highways section of the report.

In terms of design, the proposal would see the removal of one garage door and replacement with a window. In design terms, this is a modest change to the appearance of the dwelling. Furthermore, no. 10 Somerton Gardens has had a similar proposal approved (WBC ref. 000675). As such, the street scene is now varied, with not all properties now not having double garages, the development is acceptable in design terms. The rear fenestration modifications are also modest and would not result in any harm to the appearance of the host dwelling. It will be conditioned that the materials to be used shall match the host dwelling.

Neighbouring Amenity:

According to policy CP3 General principal development in the core strategy plan states that planning permission shall be granted to development that do not cause detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality.

Overlooking:

No side windows are shown to be installed as part of the proposal. The only fenestration change would be to install a front facing window, rear window and rear door into the converted garage space.

The proposed rear facing fenestration changes would not result in overlooking to neighbours to the rear owing to their positioning at ground floor level. In terms of the front facing window, there would be a separation distance of 32m between this window and no. 11 Somerton Gardens located opposite.

Loss of Light:

The proposed development would not result in loss of light as the proposal is not resulting in any increase of the footprint of the house. The conversion is internal and the modest changes to fenestration e.g. a door and a window do not present any concerns in this respect.

Overbearing:

There will be no overbearing of the neighbouring property as there is no volumetric increase associated with the proposed development. As the main works are internal

and the external works are only changes to fenestration no harm would occur in this respect.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Policy CP6 managing travel demand in core strategy plan states that planning permission will be granted to development that provide appropriate vehicular parking, having regard to car ownership.

WBC Highways were consulted on the application and advised that there is driveway parking for a minimum of two vehicles. The submitted site plan indicates three parking spaces.

As a result of the proposal, it will not result in any additional habitable rooms. The proposed part garage conversion aims to retain a single garage. The existing garage has a width of 5.0m which would have met historic parking standards. The retained garage is not considered suitable for parking in respect of its width. As such, as it stands, the retained garage cannot be classified as a parking space.

WBC Highways recommended that a revised scheme is submitted to increase the internal width of the retained garage. However, on balance, Officers consider that it has been suitably demonstrated that sufficient parking (at least 2 spaces) would still be retained on site without this amendment to the scheme. As such, the proposal is deemed acceptable from a Highways perspective despite comments raised by WBC Highway Officers.

Conclusion:

Considering the assessment made above, the application is considered acceptable and 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 subject to the following conditions: 1. Full planning Permission – 3 years 2. Approved Details 3. Parking 4. Materials
Date:	21 January 2025
Earliest date for decision:	24 December 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	21/01/25