

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242366
Site Address:	77 Wilderness Road, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 7RF
Expiry Date:	12 November 2024
Site Visit Date:	25 September 2024
Proposal: Householder application the proposed loft conversion facilitated by 7no. rooflights and the erection of 1no. rear dormer, conversion of the garage and raising of its roof to provide habitable accommodation.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Affordable Housing Thresholds
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Earley (Major Development Location)
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone – Red Risk Zone
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
JCEB Mineral Safeguarding Areas

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) National Design Guide
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
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No relevant planning history for the site.
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CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No objections
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections
WBC Ecology – No comments received

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	ETC raises no objection to this application subject to WBC imposing the following condition that as the accommodation formed as part of these proposals could be occupied separately from the main house, it shall only be used incidental to the use of the main dwelling, shall not be used, sold or sub-let as a separate dwelling without prior approval of WBC, to ensure that adequate car parking is provided on curtilage at all times and to avoid impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties, pursuant to Policies CP3 and CC07.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

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:

The proposed loft conversion would be facilitated by 7no. rooflights and 1no. large gable roofed dormer on the dwelling's rear roof slope. The rooflights would have a negligible visual impact on the character of the area due to their minimal massing.

On the other hand, it is acknowledged that the elongated massing of the dormer and the fact it aligns with the dwelling's ridge line rather than being set down from it makes it a slightly incongruous addition to the dwelling's form. Despite this, almost all public viewpoints of the dormer would be obscured with the dormer being only minorly visible from the adjoining no.3 Wilderness Court's rear garden through dense vegetation. The dormer is not overly large for the roof slope and overall, would not have an adverse impact on the character of the area.

The alterations to existing garage consist of converting its ground floor to habitable accommodation, as well as raising its gable roof form by approximately 2.3 metres to facilitate first floor accommodation.

The existing garage already conflicts with the Borough Design Guide in that it is sited in front of the dwelling's principal building line on a street not characterised by such development. It is not considered that the additional increase in height proposed, when viewed from the public realm, would have an adverse visual impact on the area, largely assisted by the screening that currently exists on the front boundary. Overall, despite, the garage would retain its original gable form and the height increase would not appear an incongruous addition within the street scene.

Due to the type of accommodation proposed within the converted garage, a condition will be imposed to ensure it is not used/sold as a separate unit of residential accommodation.

Rooflights are also proposed in the roof of the link between the main dwelling and the garage. Their visual impact would be negligible and would have no adverse impact on the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

The north-facing rooflights in the roof slopes of the main dwelling and the converted garage accommodation would overlook the site's parking area and Wilderness Road which is acceptable.

The link rooflights and changes to ground floor fenestration would have negligible overlooking impacts on all surrounding neighbours, particularly owed to the dense boundary treatments seen to the south, east and west.

The rear rooflights and dormer would retain a back-to-flank distance from no.3 Wilderness Court of between 18.5 and 21 metres (BDG minimum is 15 metres), with the southern boundary well obscured by dense, tall, mature tree lines. This is acceptable.

One rooflight is also proposed on the dwelling's eastern roof slope that would overlook Wilderness Court's densely vegetated access road which is acceptable.

Loss of Light & Overbearing:

The raising of the garage's roof height would minorly impact the adjoining The Homestead's front driveway which is acceptable.

Furthermore, due to the spatial relationships between the dwelling and the rest of the surrounding residential properties, there are no further concerns on these grounds.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal will result in additional habitable rooms. The existing garage is to be converted however the remaining level of driveway parking is considered acceptable.

Amenity Space:

The proposals would not harm the usability of the dwelling's rear amenity space.

Flooding and Drainage:

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and at low risk of surface water flooding. The proposals are almost exclusively limited to areas of existing impermeable surfacing and therefore there are no anticipated flood risk impacts.

Landscape and Trees:

The garage alterations would be sited within the same footprint as the existing. This building is surrounded by driveway hard standing, so WBC Landscape and Trees are not unduly concerned about the roots of nearby trees. Their canopies also appear to be sufficiently far from the new building.

Overall, no harm to vegetation on or adjacent to the site is anticipated.

Ecology:

Bats:

The application is supported by a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (John Wenman Ecology, August 2024). The report concludes that whilst some roosting opportunities have been identified, the development proposals for the house and garage are considered highly unlikely to result in the death, injury or disturbance of bats; the damage or destruction of a bat roost; or the obstruction of access to a bat roost. As such, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would not be required for the planned works to go ahead lawfully. However, there is a small residual risk of disturbance of bats within the house and therefore non-licensed precautions should be adopted during the work.

The standard bat informative will be attached to the decision notice if recommended for approval.

Great Crested Newts (GCN):

The site is located within a Red Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts. Despite this, the proposals result in negligible increases in ground floor footprint that are not anticipated to harm this protected species.

The standard GCN informative will be attached to the decision notice if 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:	Approval
Date:	7 November 2024
Earliest date for decision:	8 October 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	07.11.2024