

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251072
Site Address:	8 Grove Close, Wokingham, RG40 3NA
Expiry Date:	13 August 2025
Site Visit Date:	28 July 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a part single part two storey rear/side extension following demolition of existing single storey rear and side extensions, plus installation of a new canopy roof over existing porch.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Countryside

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 CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC07 – Parking
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS5 – Development in the countryside
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Crowthorne Village Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
051114	Application for a certificate of proposed lawful development for the erection of a conservatory.	Approve 16th January 2006

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Property Services – No comments received
WBC Highways – No Objection
WBC Ecology - No objection subject to conditions

External

N/A

REPRESENTATIONS

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

APPRAISAL

Site Description: A 1950's semidetached dwelling located in a cul de sac in countryside near Nine Mile Ride. At the front, the property benefits from a gravel driveway for off road parking. At the rear there is a brick outbuilding under construction adjacent to the rear boundary.

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 in Countryside where Core Strategy Policy CP11 applies and states that proposals outside of development limits will only be permitted that do not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. Furthermore, proposals outside development limits will not normally be permitted except where it contributes to and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside.

Proposal

A part single part two storey rear/side extension following demolition of existing single rear conservatory and single storey side extension, plus installation of a new canopy roof over existing porch.

The roof of the two-story extension will be marginally lower than the main roof line (approximately 0.15m lower).

The front elevation of the side extension will measure 3.6m in width, 4.5m to the top of the eaves, and 7.1m to the top of the hip roof. The east facing side wall would be approximately 11m in depth and the roof would have a gable end. The separation distance with the neighbour at no. 9 Grove Close would be approximately 2m at the

front and widening to approximately 7.5m at the rear.

The rear extension will measure approximately 11.5m in width and have 2 no. gable roof details each measuring approximately 5.8m in width. The height to the top of the eaves of the gable serving the master bedroom will be approximately 4.5m, to the top of the ridge approximately 7m, and it will extend beyond the existing rear wall by approximately 5.5m. The gable extension serving bedroom 2 will be set back and extend beyond the existing rear wall by approximately 4.5m and be approximately 1m lower than the main roof line. It will have a cat slide roof; the maximum eaves height nearest the boundary with no. 7 will be approximately 2.8m and the separation distance at first floor level will be approximately 3m.

Procedural Matters

Revised Elevation plans were received by the Council on 23rd October 2025, and after the consultation date had ended. However, the revised proposed plans show the first-floor rear extension set away from the boundary. Therefore, the amendment was not considered to have a significant impact on neighbour amenity to warrant extending the consultation period.

Location within Countryside

CP11 - Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside) states:

In order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where:

1. It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
2. It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
3. It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or
4. In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
5. In the case of replacement dwellings, the proposal must: i) Bring about environmental improvements; or ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
6. Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building.
7. Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

The site is in Countryside where Core Strategy Policy CP11 applies and criteria 3 and 4 are relevant in this case. affected. In this case, the footprint of the original building would not be inappropriately increased because a large conservatory and single outbuilding would be demolished to make way for the development. Furthermore, the dwelling is a 1950's semidetached house that was previously owned by the Council and is located in a residential road. The rear garden boundary is screened from the countryside by tall trees. Therefore, the development would not cause significant harm to the countryside.

Overall, the proposal would comply with policy CP11 in relation to the proposal impact on the Countryside.

Character of the Area:

Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character, together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users, including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

The street scene is a residential cul de sac off Nine Mile Ride comprising semidetached two storey dwellings of a similar age and design. Boundary treatments are a mixture of low hedges, fences or open plan front gardens. The properties have spacious plots and driveways for off street parking. Several properties have been altered over time and no. 5 Grove Close has a 2-storey side extension.

In this case, the application site is adjacent to a turning circle, resulting in a fan-shaped plot that broadens from front to rear. The shape of the plot creates a sense of spaciousness that mitigates the potential impact of the development on the rhythm of buildings and gaps between them. Also, the maximum eaves height of the side extension would be inferior to the main roof line of the existing property. It would be set back from the principal elevation by approximately 0.2m and the minimum separation distance with the neighbouring property would be approximately 2m. The new canopy roof over the existing porch would not significantly impact the street scene and would measure approximately 3.4m in height and extend beyond the principal elevation by approximately 1.3m which is in line with existing.

Therefore, the proposal would not cause significant harm when viewed from the public realm and would comply with CP1 and CP3 in relation to the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that development proposals should not result in a detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.

Overlooking:

On the rear elevation, the first floor the master bedroom would have double doors and a Juliet balcony to that would not overlook neighbouring habitable rooms. There would be no windows on the first-floor side elevations. On the ground floor of the east facing elevation there would be a door and a window serving the lounge that would not directly overlook the neighbouring property.

Loss of Light: The rear garden of the application site is northeast facing and the rear elevation of the adjoining neighbour receives early morning sunlight and is otherwise in shade for much of the day. The 45-degree angle test is advocated within the *British Research Establishment's (BRE) publication Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: a guide to good practice*, to assess impact on daylight and sunlight levels to

neighbours potentially impacted upon by adjacent developments. As can be seen in Figures 1 the vertical 45-degree angle test is complied with in relation to the nearest habitable room on the ground floor of no. 7 Grove Close.

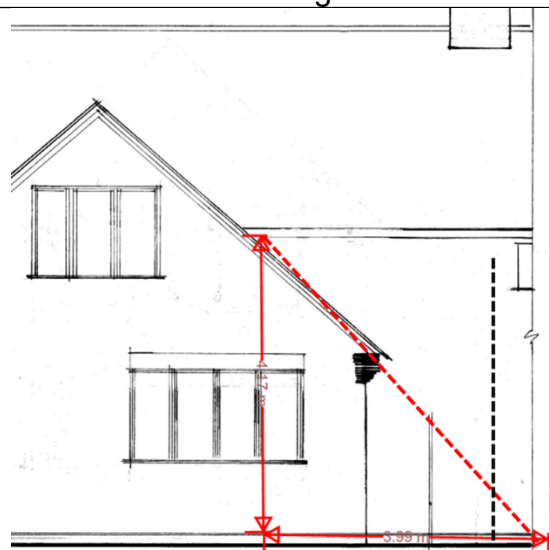


Figure 1 Vertical 45-degree angle test

Overbearing:

The Wokingham Borough Council Design Guide (BDG) provides some guidance on extensions which relate to visual impact and states that the layout and design must have a balanced response to the local context in terms of provision of external space. In this case, the side and rear extensions would be 2 storey and significantly increase the scale and bulk of the dwelling. Nevertheless, the property is set within a deep and wide plot. Furthermore, the catslide roof serving bedroom 2 creates a 3m separation gap at first floor level with no 7 and the gable extension would be set back from the master bedroom extension. Also, the adjoining property at no.7 has a tree adjacent to the boundary and the rear wall that is approximately 4m in height and would partially screen the rear extension from view. The neighbouring property at no. 9 would not directly overlook the proposed extensions due and would be forward of the rear elevation. In addition, the separation distance of the rear extension with the boundary with no.9 would be a minimum of 2m.

Therefore, the height and bulk of the dwelling will not significantly harm the neighbouring occupiers or dominate the adjoining dwelling.

Overall, the proposal would comply with Policy CP3 in relation to neighbour amenity.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The Highways Officer raises no objection and has commented: *"The proposal will result in additional habitable rooms. The existing level of parking will be retained, and this is considered acceptable to serve the development."*

Ecology: The Ecology Officer raises no objection subject to conditions and has commented: *"Potential roosting features suitable for bats were recorded including gaps between the roof tiles along the verges, gaps beneath tiles close to the base of both side of the chimney. On the front elevation there were gaps between the soffits boards and the wall that would be suitable access opportunities. No bats were seen"*

emerging from or returning to the property during emergence surveys on 28 August and 20 September. While completed at the very end of the optimal period May to August and no surveyor is positioned on the west side of the property, the survey has otherwise been undertaken to an adequate standard. I can agree with the Ecologist's conclusion that bats are not currently roosting in the property. I support JWEC's assessment that adjacent private gardens and extensive Forestry Commission broadleaved woodland provides continuous habitat of high suitability for use as bat flight paths and feeding habitat. I must disagree with the Ecological Survey Report that the property has negligible potential. JWEC stated that the PRA report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for less than 12 months. BatCraft's Ecologist fails to advise how long the survey results are valid, or proposed resurvey if the development is not implemented within 18 months.

I commented that the PRA report should have address the detrimental impacts of light pollution of the floodlights and uplighters obstructing and deterring foraging and commuting bats and guidance should be given to the owner including ILP/BCT GN/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. The photos of the emergence survey show the light pollution caused by the unnecessary uplighters and floodlights on the first floor. However, BatCraft have failed to take account of my comments on the PRA report. Contrary to the Good Practice Guidelines they provide no assessment of the constraints and detrimental impacts from lighting on bats and fauna commuting the woodland to the north nor propose any mitigation to address the light pollution to safeguard and conserve bats and wildlife in line with planning policy.

According to Local Plan policy CP3 planning permission will be granted for proposals that d) maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they have responded through the submission of clear and informative plans. CP7 states that development which may harm species of principle should put in place mitigation measures to prevent damaging impacts. According to MDD TB23 Planning permission will only be granted where they also demonstrate buffer species of principle importance and ensure that all developments are ecologically permeable.

The precautionary measures outlined by JWEC's ecologist are not included in the Ecological Survey Report and no enhancement features or replacement planting have been proposed to compensate for the loss of potential roosting features and the site clearance previously undertaken to facilitate the development. Provided that a toolbox talk is provided to contractors, the works affecting the potential roosting a batres adopts a soft roof strip approach (i.e. careful removal of roof coverings by gloved hands and hand-held tools), if bats or evidence is found a licensed ecologist is called in, a bat-friendly external lighting scheme is approved, and installation of new bat roosting features are secured in line with the NPPF paragraph 187 and Local Plan policies and best practice, there are no ecological objections.

If the development does not commence within 18 months from the date of the planning consent further bat surveys should be commissioned to establish if there have been any changes in the presence and/or abundance of bats and identify any likely new ecological impacts that might arise from any changes.

Requested conditions

Condition: Unless otherwise previously agreed in writing by the council works are to be carried out in full accordance with the proposals, recommendations given in Section 8.2.3 - 8.2.6 of the submitted Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, Ref S2986_PRA_a, June 2026).

Reason: To ensure that biodiversity, protected and priority species are not adversely affected by the proposals. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB23.

Condition: Prior to the commencement/re-commencement of development, details of biodiversity enhancements, to include integral bat boxes, bricks or access tiles or in the buildings and native and wildlife friendly landscaping, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the council. The biodiversity enhancements shall thereafter be installed as approved.

Reason: To ensure that wildlife and priority species are not adversely affected by the proposals and incorporate biodiversity in and around developments. Relevant policy: Paragraph 187 of the NPPF, Local Plan Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery policy TB23.

Condition: Prior to the commencement of the development a lighting design strategy for light-sensitive biodiversity, designed in accordance with Institution of Lighting Professionals 'Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall with details of location, height, type and direction of light sources and intensity of illumination and through the provision of appropriate colour contour plans and technical specifications clearly demonstrate that any areas to be lit will not disturb or negatively impact biodiversity. All external lighting shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the scheme. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect biodiversity. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 and paragraph 198 and Local Plan policies CP1, CP3 CP7 and MDD TB23.

Despite ecological surveys being undertaken which suggest that protected species are not using the application site, bats are mobile creatures, and it is possible that protected species may be encountered once works commence. I recommend the following informative should be appended to any such consent:

Informative: Bats are a protected species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately, and an ecological consultant contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant."

Subject to compliance with the above conditions, the proposal is acceptable in respect of its potential impact on protected species, ecology and wildlife habitat.

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:	23 October 2025
Earliest date for decision:	1 July 2025

Recommendation agreed by:	
(Authorised Officer)	
Date:	23/10/25