

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251184
Site Address:	108 Reading Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3AD
Expiry Date:	6 August 2025
Site Visit Date:	28 July 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension, plus erection of a replacement roof with 2 no. dormers to create first floor accommodation following removal of the existing roof and chimneys, creation of front and rear roof terraces, removal of the front bay window and 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 CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Major Development Location - Woodley
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements renewable energy generation C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows HC8 – Noise pollution HC10 – Odour, fumes and dust
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Woodley Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
243176	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension, plus erection of a replacement roof with 2 no. dormers to create first floor accommodation following	Application Withdrawn

	removal of the existing roof and chimneys, creation of front and rear roof terraces, removal of the front bay window and changes to fenestration.	
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CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No Objection
WBC Ecology – No Objection
WBC CIL

External

N/A

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	- The current application is only minimally different from the previous (ref: 243176), with changes limited to the roofline. - Original objections remain valid and are reiterated. - The design, particularly the inclusion of balconies, is considered out of character with the surrounding street scene. - The size and massing of the proposed structure is viewed as overbearing to neighbouring properties on both Reading Road and Elmwood Close. <i>Officer comment: Application 243176 was withdrawn in February 2025 and is not a material consideration of this proposal. The impact of the balconies on the character of the area, and the impact of the proposal on neighbour amenity related to overbearing is discussed in the main body of the report.</i>
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	Two neighbour comments received that relate to loss of privacy & overlooking, overbearing, parking, traffic, highway safety and construction disruption: Windows, balconies, and roof terraces will directly overlook a neighbouring garden and rooms. Neighbouring property is situated lower than both the road and the bungalow, increasing the impact of overlooking, sense of enclosure due to the height and scale of the extension. <i>Officer comment: Impact of the proposal on neighbouring amenity in relation to scale, height and overlooking is discussed in the main body of the report.</i>

	2. 2 concerns received about use of roof terraces and balconies that may increase noise. <u>Officer comment:</u> <i>The Borough Design Guide (BDG) states that it is often more difficult to screen against noise than against views. Furthermore, the application is an extension to an existing dwelling therefore only normal domestic activities can take place at the property, this is not a material consideration when determining the application.</i> 3. 1 concern raised about potential cooking smells from the rear patio/ kitchen extension. <u>Officer comment:</u> <i>The rear garden is spacious, and ventilation related to the kitchen would be covered by building regulations which is a separate process to planning.</i> 4. 2 concerns raised about the scale and height of the building being out of character with surrounding bungalows. Also, that the scale and number of balconies are not in keeping with the area. <u>Officer comment:</u> <i>Impact of the proposal on the character of the area is discussed in the main body of the report.</i> 5. May cause overshadowing and loss of sunlight. <u>Officer comment:</u> <i>Impact of the proposal on neighbouring amenity in relation to overshadowing and loss of light is discussed in the main body of the report.</i> 6. Inadequate on-site parking and risk of overflow parking elsewhere. Past incidents have occurred due to poor visibility and parked vehicles, including accidents at the Elmwood Close junction. <u>Officer comment:</u> <i>The Highways Officer has confirmed that three car parking spaces on the driveway will be provided for off street parking and this is acceptable.</i> 7. Construction-related disruption, including blocked access and large vehicles (2 concerns raised). <u>Officer comment:</u> <i>As this is a householder application, it would not be reasonable to add a Construction Management Plan as a condition, if it were to be approved.</i>
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APPRAISAL

Site Description: A detached, bungalow in the residential area of Woodley with a garage and brick outbuilding in the rear garden. The site is a corner plot at the entrance to Elmwood Close. At the front, the boundary is a low brick wall with iron railings above, brick pillars and double gates with iron railings. The side boundary treatment facing the

highway is a fence backed by tall vegetation that partially screens the property from the public realm when viewed from Elmwood Close.

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.

Proposal: Proposed erection of a single storey rear extension, plus erection of a replacement roof with 2 no. dormers to create first floor accommodation following removal of the existing roof and chimneys, creation of front and rear roof terraces, removal of the front bay window and changes to fenestration.

The single storey infill rear extension would have a flat roof with parapet and measure approximately 3.5m in width, 3m in depth, and 3m in height.

The height of the main roof to the top of the pitch would be approximately 6m which is 0.5m higher than existing. The 2 no. dormer extensions would be on the front and rear roof elevations. They would be approximately 0.4m lower than the main roof line and set back from the outside face of the external ground floor side walls. Each dormer extension would have a part sloping/part flat roof and measure approximately 7m in width, 3m in height and 3.5m in depth. The front dormer extension would have a balcony accessed from double doors to the front bedroom and measuring approximately 2.5m in depth and 3.7m in width. On each side elevation there would be a privacy screen 1.8m in height and there would be a front railing measuring 1.1m in height. The rear dormer extension would have a balcony accessed from double and measuring approximately 1.5m in depth and 6.5m in width. On each side elevation there would be a privacy screen 1.8m in height and there would be a front railing measuring 1.1m in height.

The main entrance door would be on the west facing side elevation. The external finish to the wall of the principal elevation would comprise smooth render and brickwork to the ground floor, and composite cladding to the dormer extensions. Roof tiles would match existing.

Procedural Matters

Revised Elevation plans were received by the Council on 4th August 2025, and after the consultation date had ended. However, the revised proposed plans showed a minor amendment to show the height of the privacy screens scaled to 1.8m in height. Therefore, the amendment was not considered to have a significant impact on neighbour amenity to warrant extending the consultation period.

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 Wokingham Borough Council Design Guide (BDG) provides some guidance on extensions which relate to design and scale. It states the following:

- Maximum eaves height and ridge height should be no more than those of the existing property.
- Side extensions should be set back by 1m, preferably with a lower roof line and should be at least 1m from the plot boundary.
- The rhythm of buildings and gaps between them along the street frontages is often important to the character of the area.
- The eaves and/or ridge height should not be raised in height unless buildings in the local context are significantly taller.
- Front extensions should not project significantly forward of the building line.

The street scene is a residential road lined with a row of detached bungalows and houses, and semi-detached houses of varying ages and architectural design. Boundary treatments are either tall hedging, brick walls or fences. There are mature trees and grass verges visible from the public realm at intervals along Reading Road. The application site faces onto detached houses that are partially screened by tall trees, two of which are Grade 2 Listed buildings (Bulmersh Manor and Olden Oak at 103, London Road). The site occupies a corner plot at the entrance to Elmwood Close. The immediate neighbour at 110 Reading Road, has 2. no dormer window extensions that are less prominent than the proposal. However, the semidetached properties at no's 120 and 122 have side dormer extensions that would be higher than the proposed dormers when measured from ground level. There are no other examples of dwellings with balconies in the immediate street scene. Furthermore, the rhythm of buildings and gaps between the street is not consistent.

The BDG recommends that the eaves height of single storey extensions should not exceed 3m within 2m of a side boundary. In this case, the maximum eaves height would be approximately 5m and the maximum height to the top of the pitch would be approximately 6m. The west facing wall of the first-floor extension would be approximately 1.8m from the boundary with no. 110 and marginally less than what is recommended in the BDG. The separation distance of the east facing wall with the boundary adjacent to Elmwood Close would be approximately 1.2m and the flank-to-flank separation distance with the immediate neighbour at 2 Elmwood Close would be approximately 10m.

Although there are no other examples of first floor balconies in the street, the front balcony would be set back from the front boundary by approximately 17m and have a privacy screen measuring 1.8m in height facing Elmwood Close. Furthermore, the proposal would not be overly prominent when viewed from the public realm in Reading Road due to the deep front garden. When viewing the proposal from Elmwood Close,

the west and rear facing elevations would be partially visible from the public realm behind the fence and vegetation. Nevertheless, the rear and front balconies would be obscured by privacy screens and face onto the public streetscene.

Overall, the proposal does not full comply with Policy CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy in relation to character of the area because the separation distance with the immediate neighbour at 110 Reading Road is 0.2m less than what is recommended in the BDG. However, this marginal separation distance shortfall would not be considered to be overly harmful to the streetscene, therefore is not a robust reason for refusal of the application, if other aspects of the proposal are compliant with policy.

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.

The Wokingham Borough Council Design Guide (BDG) provides some guidance on extensions which relate to protecting residential amenity. It states the following:

- Rear extensions should not project more than 4 meters from the main rear wall where they are close to a boundary.
- The eaves height of single storey extensions should not exceed 3m within 2m of a side boundary.

Overlooking: The BDG recommends minimum separation distances for 1 and 2 storeys to maintain privacy and limit sense of enclosure. In this case, the back to flank distance with 1 Elmwood Close would be approximately 30m which is more than the recommended 12m. The flank to side boundary separation distance on either side would be approximately 1.8m and 1.2m respectively which is more than the 1m recommended in the BDG.

The proposed first floor side elevation would be set back from the building line of 2 Elmwood Close and would not directly overlook habitable windows. Furthermore, the first floor east and west side windows would serve a bathroom and a landing. Therefore, if the application were to be approved, the windows would be conditioned to be obscure glazed and non-opening below 1.8m from the internal floor level. Furthermore, ground levels of the proposal site and neighbouring properties are similar and would not significantly impact overlooking.

Two balconies are proposed. Whilst the proposal includes a new balcony at first floor, any views from this would be towards the front driveway/entrance of the property which is already overlooked from the main road. The rear balcony is set away from the side boundary with 110no. and partially screened by both the parapet wall, privacy screens and the existing pitched roof garage. It is also noted that the balconies would only serve bedrooms, therefore it is unlikely it would be used at all times.

The submitted plans show 1.8m high permanent privacy screens to the sides of the front and rear balconies. The privacy screens would comprise comprising level 4 obscured glazing to assist in mitigating any impact from loss of privacy.

Loss of Light: The 1 no. landing rooflight at 110 Reading Road does not serve a habitable room and there are no other windows on the side wall facing the proposed extension. The rear ground floor extension would be set back from no. 110 by approximately 0.5m and the first-floor rear extension would be set back by 3.5m. The front first floor extension would be in line with the principal elevation at 110. Therefore, there would be no significant increase in overshadowing or loss of sunlight.

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 footprint of the existing dwelling will increase slightly due to the infill extension at the rear. The roof height of the dormers would be lower than the existing roof line. The maximum roof height to the top of the pitch would be 0.5m taller than existing. However, there are example of higher roof lines along the street at no's 120 and 122 Reading Road, and opposite the application site. In addition, the proposal occupies a corner plot with a spacious rear and front garden, and the 10m separation distance with the flank of 2 Elmwood Close creates a spacious transition between the properties.

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

Overall, the proposal would comply with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy regarding neighbour amenity.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The proposal will increase the numbers of habitable rooms from 5 to 8. The existing driveway will be retained for parking. According to the WBC Car Parking Standards, the development of such scale in Urban location will require three parking within the red line boundary. Each parking space shall have minimum dimensions of 5.0m x 2.5m. The 18.7m long driveway will have sufficient spaces for three car parking spaces with appropriate dimensions by utilising the existing dropped crossing, which is acceptable. No negative impacts on abilities for cycle storage are expected, which is acceptable.

Ecology: The Ecology Officer raises no objection and states: *"I am satisfied that the survey methodology and effort are adequate for the Ecologist to conclude that the property is not currently used by bats and a protected species licence is not needed for the development proposed to proceed legally. There are no ecological objections to the development as proposed. I note the Ecologist states the validity of the reports cease after one year from the survey, or if the site conditions change due to unspecified works that affect the site whichever is the sooner. I request that WBC informative I19 is included in the decision notice."*

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 an informative is added to any consent.

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:	04 August 2025
Earliest date for decision:	20 June 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	5 August 2025