

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251396
Site Address:	60 Ryhill Way, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 4AZ
Expiry Date:	6 August 2025
Site Visit Date:	9 July 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed conversion of the existing garage into habitable accommodation with replacement of the garage door with new 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 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC07 – Parking
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
250490	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed conversion of the double garage to habitable accommodation with associated changes to fenestration.	Refused: May 2025
192739	Householder application for the proposed conversion of the garage to habitable accommodation and relocation of the front door to form a new enclosed porch.	Approved: November 2019
011438	Proposed single storey rear extension to dwelling to form conservatory.	Approved: April 2001

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Property Services – No comments
WBC Highways – No objection
WBC Green Infrastructure – No comments
WBC CIL – No comments

WBC Ecology – No comments

WBC Sports Development (Places and Neighbourhoods) – No comments

WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments

External

None

REPRESENTATIONS

Earley Council	Town	No objection subject to a condition that the converted area shall not be used as a separate unit of accommodation. Notwithstanding the above, the Town Council have raised the following concerns: • The use of the property is unclear, and the Town Council questions whether a change of use and a HMO license is required. • Whether consultation was undertaken correctly (<i>Officer note: both the adjoining neighbours were consulted in line with the statutory neighbouring notification requirements</i>)
Ward Member(s)		No comments received
Neighbours		16 letters received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds. • Overdevelopment. • Previous Refusals. • Contradiction with Local Planning Policy. • Misuse of Planning. • Parking & Traffic Issues. • Traffic Congestion: • Emergency Access Risk: • Impact on Character. • HMO Use Not In-Keeping. • Dangerous Precedent. • Amenity, Wellbeing & Community Impact. • Increased Noise and Waste.

	• Erosion of Community Cohesion. • Lack of Consultation & Transparency. • Use of Property as a Business Venture. • Violation of Deed Restrictions. • Property Values.
--	---

APPRAISAL

The application site is located within a residential setting of Earley and is occupied by a two-storey detached property. This application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the properties existing, internal, double garage.

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 conversion of the garage would be facilitated by the removal of the existing garage doors and the addition of 2no windows with brick infill below. These minor changes would not detract from the appearance of the site, nor have an unacceptable impact on the street scene. Accordingly, the proposal would have an acceptable visual impact and would comply with policies CP1 & CP3 of the Core Strategy in this respect.

Neighbouring Amenity: The proposed development has been the subject of significant concern from local residents, as summarised in the relevant section above, and addressed in detail below.

In most cases, the most pressing concern from local residents relates to the use of the converted room, and the dwelling itself, in which objections were raised towards the potential status of the property as a HMO. In this respect, significant consultation has been undertaken between the Councils Development Management and Enforcement departments. Investigations have been conducted on this matter, in which no breach of planning control has been identified, and which concluded that no material change of use of the dwelling has occurred. Nonetheless, further information was requested by the LPA from the applicant regarding the current use of the property. It has since been

stated the dwelling facilitates private supported accommodation for individuals, the number of which would not exceed four. There are staff that operate from the property on a shift pattern to provide support to the occupiers, who are between 16 and 18 years old, however, it is not the staff's main residence. The staff are supervisors rather than care givers and there is always someone present on site. The use does not constitute a care home, nor does the scale of the use represent a HMO, as confirmed by the Councils licensing team. Accordingly, there is no material change of use as the property is a single dwellinghouse and the application to convert the garage into habitable accommodation can therefore be considered through this householder application.

Neighbouring residents have also referred to the previously refused application at the site (ref: 250490). This was a certificate of lawfulness application, seeking to confirm whether the garage conversion could be undertaken as permitted development. As there was a restrictive condition on the property, the application was refused. It should be noted that the scope of assessment for this previously refused application is fundamentally different to the current submission. The presence of the aforementioned condition that restricts any garage conversions within the estate without the prior approval of the LPA does not equate to all conversions being unacceptable following a thorough assessment of the planning merits of the scheme. In this instance, the Highways Officer has raised no objection to the development on the grounds of highway safety and parking provision, such that there is no overriding justification to withhold planning permission.

With regard to objections relating to the potential increase of noise and waste, it should be noted that there are currently only two permanent residents at the property, and it has been stated that there is no intention to increase this beyond the maximum capacity of four. The level of noise and waste produced by the conversion of the garage to habitable accommodation would be no greater than that expected from the existing dwelling.

Further concerns, such as the violation of deed restrictions, the impact on property values, and the consideration of future scenarios, are not material considerations for this planning application and cannot impact upon its determination.

In summary, whilst the concerns of the neighbouring residents have been duly noted, it is not considered that the conversion of the existing garage to a family room would adversely impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residents in relation to loss of light, loss of privacy, any overbearing impact or noise concerns.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: Despite the concerns of the neighbouring residents, the Highways Officer has carefully reviewed the application with regard to the impact on parking and traffic issues, and raised no objection in this respect. The proposal would result in an additional habitable room, however, this will not have a significant impact in respect of the council's parking standards. The existing garage does not meet the council's current standards for parking a car and as such, there is no significant loss of parking. The existing level of driveway parking will be retained, and this is considered acceptable in this instance.

Conclusion: For all the above, the proposal is acceptable, and the application is 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
Date:	24 July 2025
Earliest date for decision:	8 July 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	28 July 2025

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Major Development Location of Earley