

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260632
Site Address:	18 Sundew Close, Wokingham, RG40 5YB
Expiry Date:	10 May 2026
Site Visit Date:	27 April 2026
Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of amenity land to residential garden and erect a 1.8m fence following removal of existing brick wall.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Major Development Location – Wokingham

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
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
260633	Householder application for the proposed single-storey rear extension and garage conversion forming habitable accommodation.	Approve 22 April 2026

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Internal	
WBC Landscape and Trees – Objection Raised	
External	
N/A	

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	1. No objection is raised in principle to the proposed works. However, concerns are raised regarding the shared boundary wall, which is not properly jointed at the corner; any separation works should ensure responsibility for damage to the adjoining section and appropriate finishing of the exposed end. Additionally, a copper beech tree located close to the boundary is considered oversized, and a request is made for its reduction or removal alongside other vegetation works. It is also requested that all works are undertaken by qualified professionals to avoid potential damage. <i><u>Officer comment:</u> If the application were to be approved, it would not authorise any works to be carried out on, over or under a neighbour's land or property without first obtaining their consent, and does not obviate the need for compliance with the requirements of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996. The copper beech tree is not protected by a TPO, and its maintenance is not a planning matter. The request that all building works be undertaken by qualified professionals is noted. However, this is not a material planning consideration and matters relating to construction standards and workmanship are addressed separately through Building Regulations.</i> 2. No objection is raised to the removal of overgrown shrubbery and incorporation of the land into the garden. However, concern is expressed that replacing the existing brick wall with a fence would be out of keeping with the prevailing boundary treatments along Campion Way and Sorrel Close, which are predominantly brick. Reuse of existing bricks to form a wall is preferred to maintain visual consistency, durability, and appearance. Concern is also raised regarding the presence of a telecommunications control box, and the potential impact of excavation works on local connectivity. <i><u>Officer comment:</u> The impact of the proposal on the character of the area is discussed in the main body of the</i>

	<i>report. The proximity of the development to the telecommunications control box is noted. However, the proposed replacement fence would be set back approximately 1m from the public footpath and offset from the control box adjacent to the path.</i>
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APPRAISAL

Site Description: A detached dwelling occupying a corner plot at the junction with Campion Way. The rear side boundary adjacent to Campion Way is a brick wall measuring approximately 1.8m in height and 6m in length that is set back from the highway by approximately 2m to 2.8m. It extends from the rear wall of the main dwelling to the rear boundary of no. 1 Sorrel Close and is screened from public view by tall vegetation that covers a strip of privately owned amenity land.

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: Change of use of amenity land to residential garden and erect a 1.8m fence following removal of existing brick wall. The proposed footprint of the land to be enclosed following demolition of the existing wall would be approximately 7.3m². The fence would measure approximately 9m in length, 1.8m in height and would be set back from the principal elevation by approximately 1.8m and set back from the highway by approximately 7m to the south and 1m to the east.

Procedural Matters

Revised plans were received by the Council on 11th May 2026, and after the consultation date had ended. However, the revised proposed plans showed a minor amendment to show the proposed fence set back 1m from the public footpath and soft landscaping to be planted. 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. R12 of the

Borough Design Guide (BDG) states that “*boundary treatments should be designed to contribute positively to the character of the area and to the quality of the public realm. Boundaries to public areas, such as streets, should be robust, for instance brick walls or railings...while avoiding the use of less robust solutions such as close board timber*”.

The street scene is verdant with Sundew Close being a residential cul-de-sac comprising 18 detached houses with open plan front gardens and soft landscaping. The application site occupies a corner plot and the east facing side boundary faces onto Campion Way where front boundaries in the vicinity are mainly low edges and side boundaries are brick. Although the boundary immediately opposite in Campion Way is a hedge, Figure 5 shows a 1.8m close board fence forming the side boundary adjacent to the highway at 2 Sorrel Close.

In this case, the existing wall to be demolished is not currently visible from the highway due to the overgrown dense vegetation covering the amenity land. Furthermore Figures 1-4 show that the privately owned amenity land itself has been enclosed by vegetation since 2009. Figures 5 and 6 show another example of a 1.8m fence adjacent to the highway at 2 Sorrel Close and located approximately 30m from the application site.

Hence, while the majority of residential boundary treatments in the surrounding area comprise vegetation and/or brick walls, the side boundary fence at 2 Sorrel Close forms also part of the character in the immediate vicinity of the application site which is a material consideration in assessing this application. A planting scheme is shown on the revised site plan that will soften the appearance of the proposed fence when viewed from the public realm.

Notwithstanding the objection raised by the Council’s Tree and Landscape Officer, these revised plans now include a 1m wide planting strip along the frontage of the proposed fence. Whilst it is acknowledged that this provision remains at the lower end of what would typically be expected to support more substantial landscaping, it nevertheless represents a tangible improvement on the originally submitted scheme, which provided insufficient space for planting to establish and thrive. In the context of the site, where the existing boundary treatment and amenity land are not readily visible from the public realm and where similar boundary treatments exist in the vicinity, it is considered that the proposed planting would provide an appropriate degree of softening to the timber fence over time.



Figure 1 Google street view image dated 2009



Figure 2 Google street view image dated 2023



Figure 3 Site visit image taken 27/04/2026



Figure 4 Site visit image taken 27/04/2026



Figure 5 Google Street View 2 Sorrel Close (2023)



Figure 6 Proximity of 2 Sorrel Close with 18 Sundew Close

Therefore, while the loss of the wall/landscaping is lamentable and the objections to the application that have been received have been carefully assessed, the proposal would be comparable of other boundary treatments in close proximity of the application site. The application would not be in direct compliance with guidance contained within the Council's Borough Design Guide (BDG) in respect of the proposed materials, however, would also not be so injurious to the visual amenity of the area to warrant refusal of the application. In addition, a soft landscaping condition is recommended to secure details and implementation of planting between the proposed fence and the footpath.

Overall, whilst the proposal departs from the Borough Design Guide advice which favours more robust boundary treatments such as brick walls adjacent to the public realm, the circumstances of the site and its immediate context are material considerations. The existing wall is not readily visible, the land has long been enclosed by vegetation, and comparable boundary treatments exist in close proximity. When taken together with the proposed set-back and supplementary planting, the development would not result in unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the street scene. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to accord with the overarching objectives of Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3, which seek

to secure high quality design and to maintain or enhance the character of the area, and is therefore acceptable in policy terms notwithstanding the limited conflict with the Borough Design Guide.

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. In this case the proposal would be the same height as the existing wall and wood does not impact neighbour amenity in relation to overlooking, loss of Light or overbearing appearance.

Highways: Visibility splays at the junction of Sundew Close and Campion Way will not be impacted by the proposed fence that would be located behind tall vegetation and set back approximately set back from the road junction in Sundew Close by approximately 7m.

Landscape and Trees: The Tree and Landscape Officer raises an objection to the proposal and has commented: *“The proposed timber fencing would change the existing street scene along Campion Way, particularly along this stretch of the roadway which features lengths of brick wall. Amenity spaces within this community feature planting, and the proposed configuration of timber fencing with 750mm of amenity space is devoid of planting and does not provide adequate space for planting to be successful and thrive (typically 1m+ wide planting spaces). (Ref: WEN, L- 2852 -2, Feb 2026).”*

Officer comment: The applicant has submitted a revised site plan to show the wall set back 1m from the highway and a planting plan comprising shrubs measuring 500m to 1.2m in height fronting the fence. Therefore, the proposal would comply with Policy CC03 of the Adopted Local Plan Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping.

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 reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. 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
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Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	27 May 2026
Earliest date for decision:	8 April 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	27/05/26