

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242273
Site Address:	220 London Road, Wokingham, Wokingham, RG40 1SW
Expiry Date:	31 October 2024
Site Visit Date:	28/11/2023 – See 232676
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed side and rear two storey extension and single storey front extension. Including major internal refurbishment of existing space, demolition of existing garage and addition of rear balcony, changes to existing fenestration and addition of roof lights on both existing dwelling and extension.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
- Scale and Location of Development Proposals
- Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
- Landscape Character Assessment Area
- Green Routes and Riverside Paths Consultation Zone

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP12 – Green Belt CP13 – Town Centres and Shopping CP14 – Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre CP15 – Employment Development CP17 – Housing Delivery
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking

	CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
232676	Pre-application advice for the incorporation of elements of the existing dwelling as part of a wider proposal to construct a replacement dwelling.	Replied, 08/12/2023

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage – No objections subject to a condition.
WBC Highways - No objections.
WBC Landscape and Trees – Objects to proposed development
WBC CIL – The proposed development would be CIL Liable
WBC Ecology Householder – No comments received.

External

None consulted.

REPRESENTATIONS

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

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is a two-storey detached dwelling located in a large plot (approx. 1100 m²). It has a hipped roof with a front projecting gable. There is also a two storey rear projection that has a flat roof. The site is adjacent to the Three Frogs pub (the pub being to the east) to the west are residential dwellings which are primarily detached and finished wholly or in part with white render. The host dwelling is located in a substantial plot with a detached garage adjacent to the main house. Street trees line the opposite side of the road.

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:National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework states 'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.'

National Design Guide

Section B1, paragraph 68 of the National Design Guide states that the built form of well-designed places should relate well to:

- the site, its context and the opportunities they present;
- the proposed identity and character for the development in the wider place;

Paragraph 69 expands on this, highlighting that houses and streets should establish an appropriate relationship with the pattern, sizes and proportions of existing houses in the local area.

Wokingham Borough Council Adopted Core Strategy

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that maintain and enhance the high quality of the environment.

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy emphasises 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.

Borough Design Guide SPD

Section 4 of the Borough Design Guide states that any alteration and extension to an existing building should be well-designed, respond positively to the original building, contribute positively to the local character and street scene, and relate well to the neighbouring properties.

Assessment

Properties on the northern side of London Road historically enjoyed deep plots typical of its edge of settlement location; however, these were reduced with the onset of residential development to the north in Harmar Close and Woodrow Drive in the 1970s. While the character of London Road is distinctly varied when viewed as a whole, the host dwelling forms part of a collection of two storey mid-20th-century, post-war houses on the north side of the road. These dwellings share similar traditional architectural elements and materials, including a mix of red brick and cream roughcast/rendered walls, multi-pane windows, and simple clay-tiled rooflines. These features, paired with the regular cadence of window placement across these properties collectively contributes to the positive character of the area.

The proposal seeks the erection of a two-storey side and rear extension that would collectively wrap around the northeast corner of the original property, along with the addition of a single-storey front extension and changes to fenestration.

Section 4 of the BDG SPD advises the following:

'Alterations or extensions should be clearly subservient to the form and scale or the original building in most situations, although there may be exceptions where it is more appropriate to design a seamless continuation.'

The proposed extensions would clearly not be subservient in scale or design to the original building and would not constitute a seamless continuation of its form. Instead, the extensions would result in a cumulative enlargement that overwhelms the original structure, nearly presenting as a new replacement dwelling.

The simple form and architectural detailing of the original dwelling would be significantly compromised, particularly through the introduction of a front-facing gable with large, floor-to-ceiling windows. The extent of new glazing within this gable would introduce a prominent feature that contrasts sharply with the proportions of the other windows in the dwelling and the nearby houses along this section of London Road. While some properties around the site incorporate modern elements, these are balanced and proportionate to the respective dwellings to preserve their character appearance.

This impact would be further compounded by the proposed placement of ground and first-floor windows on the front elevation, which appear off-centred and awkwardly close to the edges of the front facade. This positioning creates an unconventional arrangement that detracts from the presently cohesive appearance of the front elevation and would draw the eye to the application site to a much greater degree.

The large glazed central gable would jar with the design of the two wings because whilst the gable feature is dominated by glazing, the wings would have large areas of unarticulated wall with the windows being located awkwardly off-centre towards the flank elevations. Overall, it is not considered that the proportions and design of the existing asymmetrical house are appropriate to be mirrored into a large symmetrically fronted dwelling.

The considerable 2 storey depth of the extension would result in large and bulky form of development that does not relate well to the existing property or the other dwellings of similar style in this section of the road. The building depth will be 18.5m in comparison to the neighbouring property which is approximately 12.2m deep at 2 storey level.

The significant depth also results in a large side elevation with poor detailing that will be a contrived and prominent feature in the street scene due to the adjacent open pub car park. The proposed two-storey east-facing gable, although subservient in size and scale, would appear as an incongruous and incompatible feature on the dwelling due to its central placement on a largely blank side elevation. The lack of fenestration or other detailing along this side elevation fails to break up the side and rear extensions massing and exacerbates the stark and unrelieved appearance of this elevation. This impact is particularly significant given that the dwelling is situated in a visually prominent location, with clear views of the front and west side elevation from London Road, particularly on approaches from east to west. Consequently, the proposed extensions would be highly visible within the street scene and from adjacent public area.

The attractive open eaves detailing and glazing bar window design would also be lost as consequence of the extensions and replaced with less sympathetic boxed eaves and plain casement windows. This does not adhere to the Borough Design Guide which states *'the materials selected for alterations or an extension should match or improve upon the quality of those of the existing building'* – the development fails to achieve this.

The large flat crown of the building would not reflect the pitch roof of the existing dwelling. The Borough Design Guide states the roof form of the extension should take its form from the main building, and the proposal fails to adhere to this guidance. The neighbouring dwelling does however have flat crown but the design of that property more closely reflects the traditional form, design and asymmetry of the existing house. In this case the large flat crown compounds the overtly large scale and massing of the resulting building.

The supporting Design and Access Statement provides some context regarding where various design features are found within the local area, and it is noted that the design has evolved partially in response to pre-application feedback under reference 232676. Nevertheless, nearby properties that have undergone alterations and extensions remain subordinate and sympathetic to their original forms, displaying a more uniform character with regular window positioning and balanced frontages.

Para 139 of the NPPF states, *'development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.'* As set out above, the proposal fails to meet the requirements of the Borough Design Guide SPD and should be refused in accordance with the NPPF.

The proposed extensions would not be subservient and would to a large extent, leave the original dwelling largely illegible within the context of the overall dwelling which

would stand as a result of the proposals. In summary, the proposed extensions, by virtue of their scale, size, bulk, and design, would result in over-dominant and incongruously bulky additions that detract from the visual appearance of the existing dwelling, disrupt the cohesive design shared with the adjoining row of properties, and undermine the character of the surrounding area. The excessive glazing, off-centred fenestration on the front elevation, and awkwardly positioned two-storey side gable would introduce discordant features that fail to respect the character of the host dwelling and its context. The proposals would therefore be contrary to policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, Section 4 of the Borough Design Guide, section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Section B1 of the National Design Guide.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The proposed first-floor, west side facing bathroom window could be conditioned to be obscure glazed and restricted in opening height to mitigate any overlooking towards the neighbouring patio area of no.218 London Road. The remaining ground and first floor windows and rear insert balcony would be suitably located away from any residential amenities not to raise any overlooking or loss of privacy concerns.

In terms of loss of light and overbearing concerns, the bulk of the proposed extensions would be suitably located towards the west side of the application site, away from any residential amenities. As such, any overbearing or sense of enclose concerns would be minimal.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal will increase the numbers of habitable room from 6 to 9 and remove the existing garage of dimensions 7.8m x 4.8m, resulting in a loss of 0.5 parking space. There are no alternations proposed along the driveway and the existing driveway, which could accommodate up to five parking spaces will be retained.

The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed this application and considers that three off-street parking spaces would be sufficient for a dwelling of this size, and in accordance with the council's Parking Standards. Despite the garage is removed, direct access to the rear garden is available for cycle storage, which is acceptable. As such, there are no highways issues

Amenity Space:

The remaining rear amenity space would meet the minimum depth requirement of 11 metres. The proposal is therefore acceptable in this regard.

Flooding and Drainage:

The existing dwelling is within flood zone 1 and some areas are within low-risk surface water flood risk.

The proposed development would result in an increase in impermeable area. The Council's Drainage Officer notes that no existing or proposed drainage details have been provided. These details could be secured via a planning condition in the event of any approval.

Landscape and Trees:

The site is on a Green Route, being the arterial A329 London Road. Many of the properties along this part of the road have been altered over time. Trees and mature shrubs which offer some public amenities grow the boundaries of the site.

Policy CP3 states that proposals 'Maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora...' .CC03 requires protection and retention of existing trees, hedges and other landscape features and incorporation of high quality, ideally, native planting and landscaping as an integral part of the scheme. The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer considers that none of these aspects have been demonstrated in the application, therefore objects to the proposed development.

The application site benefits from a generously sized front driveway, along with several small trees, shrubs, and grassed areas. Given that the number of available parking spaces exceeds the Council's Parking Standards, it is considered that there is sufficient space to introduce a scheme of soft landscaping across the site to enhance visual amenity in accordance with Policy CP3 and CC03. This could be secured through a condition in the event of approval. However, any new landscaping would not be sufficient to fully mitigate the identified harm to the character of the area as outlined in the relevant section of this report.

Ecology:

The site is located in habitat which matches where bat roosts have previously been found in the borough and is surrounded by a habitat suitable for use by foraging and commuting bats including large, connected trees that border the southern side of London Road.

The supporting Bat Scoping Survey (Urban Tree Experts, July 2024, ref: SPH/NP/PEA-24/05.07) found no evidence of bats during the internal and external inspections of the property and concludes that the potential for roosting bats is deemed to be negligible. As such, the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect roosting bats or other protected species.

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.

Conclusion:

As set out, the proposed extensions, by virtue of their scale, size, bulk, and design, would result in over-dominant and incongruously bulky additions that detract from the visual appearance of the existing dwelling, disrupt the cohesive design shared with the adjoining row of properties, and undermine the character of the surrounding area. The excessive glazing, off-centred fenestration on the front elevation, and awkwardly positioned two-storey side gable would introduce discordant features that fail to respect the character of the host dwelling and its context. The proposals would therefore be contrary to policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, Section 4 of the Borough Design Guide, section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Section B1 of the National Design Guide.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Refusal
Date:	25 October 2024
Earliest date for decision:	26 September 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	31.10.2024