

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260553
Site Address:	36 Old Bath Road, Sonning, Wokingham, RG4 6TA
Expiry Date:	16 June 2026
Site Visit Date:	4 June 2026
Proposal: Householder application for proposed erection of single storey infill front extension with changes to roof, two storey side extension, garage conversion and insertion of 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 CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS4 – Development within or adjacent to minor settlements H12 – Residential development of existing private gardens FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
23148	First floor extension to provide dressing room and ensuite bathroom	Approved 16 th May 1985
26845	Erection of a garage	Approved January 1987

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal
WBC Digital Solutions Scanning- No comments received WBC CIL- No comments received WBC Ecology Newts- No comments received WBC Ecology- No comments received
External
None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	Sonning Parish Council raise no objection to the proposal although the single storey rear extension is still close to the boundary of the neighbouring dwelling.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL
Site Description: This application site relates to a two-storey detached dwelling with associated parking and landscaping in the residential area of Sonning, Wokingham. The site is characterised by dwellings with no consistent design or character. Planning History: The site has had previous applications submitted, including application 23148, which was approved on 16th May 1985 for the erection of a first-floor extension to provide a dressing room and ensuite bathroom. Subsequently, application 26845 was approved in January 1987 for the erection of a garage. Proposal: This application seeks permission for the proposed erection of single storey infill front extension with changes to roof, two storey side extension, single storey side/rear extension and insertion of new fenestration. The proposed single storey front extension will approximately be 2.8 meters in depth, 4 meters in width and 3 meters in height. The two-storey side extension will approximately be 4 meters in width, 17 meters in depth and 8 meters to the height of the ridge line. The proposed single storey side/rear extension will approximately be 7 meters in depth, 5 meters in width and 3 meters in height. Whilst the attending site, it was noted that the applicant has since stated the demolition of the existing garage space, however, this has been advised to stop until Planning Permission has been granted hence the change in the description of works. 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: Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that developments are of appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to other adjoining land users. R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

Old Bath Road and the surrounding area comprise of dwellings situated on large plots with vast amenity space that follow no consistent prevailing architecture or design. There have been numerous proposals throughout the locality including the erection of single storey front extensions, single storey side and first floor rear extensions and garage conversions that can be seen from the public realm which don't detriment the character of the area.

A pre-application enquiry submitted in January 2026 for a similar form of development advised that the proposal could be acceptable in principle, subject to a number of amendments. These included positioning the single-storey rear extension further away from the neighbouring boundary, removing the proposed first-floor bathroom dormer, and confirming that there would be no subdivision of the plot. This advice is material to the assessment of the current application, where relevant design and neighbour amenity considerations remain key.

From the plans submitted the proposal suggests a self-contained annexe, with a proposed kitchen, utility, W/C and sunroom at ground floor level, and an additional stairwell to the first floor. At first floor level, there are two bedrooms (one with an en-suite), a bathroom and storage cupboard.

The application site is modest in size, and the proposed development appears a sympathetic and subservient addition to the host dwelling. The proposed extension will be set down from the ridgeline of the host dwelling and will incorporate a hipped roof design to match the host dwelling. The current proposal has sought to address the concerns raised through the pre-application advice. In particular, the previously proposed first-floor bathroom dormer on the front elevation has been omitted and replaced with a smaller window, thereby reducing its visual bulk. Furthermore, the single-storey side/rear extension has been repositioned further away from the neighbouring boundary with No. 34 Old Bath Road, which is considered to improve the spatial relationship with the adjoining property.

With that said, while the proposed development is substantial in scale and can function as a self-contained annex, each application must be assessed on its individual merits. It is recognised that plots along Old Bath Road are vast in size, providing the ability in accommodating larger forms of development. In this instance, the proposal does not present as a fully independent unit; the enlarged dwelling retains a single principal entrance on the front elevation, alongside a secondary side access. Internally, although the two-storey side extension includes facilities which include a kitchen, WC and bedrooms, it remains physically connected to the host dwelling, with access provided

at ground floor level via a door within the main hallway. There is also shared use of the garden, accessed through the sunroom. As such, the proposal reads as an extension to the main dwelling rather than a wholly separate unit of accommodation.

Moreover, Policy R15 of the Borough Design Guide requires development to provide reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms. In this case, the proposal has acknowledged the pre-application advice. Whilst the scheme does not fully comply with the recommended flank-to-boundary separation distances and retains approximately 1 metre of amenity space, the extension would be set around 0.8 metres from the boundary and has no windows proposed on the side elevation which faces No.34 Old Bath Road. Given that this element of the proposal is single storey in scale, this reduced separation distance is not considered to result in a harmful level of overbearing impact, loss of light, or overlooking to neighbouring occupiers.

In respect of the two-storey side extension, the proposal accords with the Borough Design Guide by maintaining an approximate 1 metre separation from the boundary with No. 34. Only one small window is proposed at first floor level on the side elevation, serving the stairwell. Given that this window does not serve a habitable room and is positioned such that it would not overlook private amenity areas such as neighbouring patios or gardens, it is not considered to give rise to concerns in terms of overlooking, loss of light, or overbearing impact.

Therefore, the proposed development is considered acceptable and will have an acceptable impact on the character of the street scene. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and the advice and guidance contained in the Borough Design Guide.

Neighbouring Amenity: Paragraph 135(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires development to secure a “high standard of amenity for existing and future users”. This is reinforced by Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy, which requires development to be of an appropriate scale, mass, layout and height, and to achieve a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities or quality of life of adjoining occupiers.

the single storey side/rear extension does not fully comply with the Borough Design Guide in respect of separation distances. However, no windows are proposed within the side elevation at ground floor level, thereby avoiding direct overlooking. At first floor level, whilst the scheme broadly aligns with the BDG, the single side-facing window serving the stairwell at No. 34 Old Bath Road is not associated with a habitable room. As such, it would not give rise to harmful overlooking. Furthermore, although the development results in some loss of private garden area, sufficient amenity space would remain to meet the needs of future occupiers.

Overall, having regard to its modest height, scale and relationship with neighbouring properties, the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity by reason of overlooking, loss of light or overbearing impact.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The proposed parking provision states that there is no change in level of driveway parking available, and no off-street parking is proposed. As a result, the proposal does not impact parking or access provisions, therefore, no objection from Highways have been raised.

Flooding and Drainage: The application site is situated in an area suitable for low level fluvial flooding. The proposed development is minor in scale and is not expected to result in any significant increase in impermeable area or surface water runoff. As such the development is unlikely to have a material impact on flood risk either on site or elsewhere. Therefore, there have been no objections raised.

Ecology: The application is situated within an area suitable for Bat Roosts. The Preliminary Roost Assessment submitted by John Wenman after the survey was conducted on the 23rd March 2026 states that *“During the survey, approximately 50 medium-sized droppings, deposited by brown long-eared bats (Plecotus auritus), and approximately 150-200 small-sized droppings, deposited by soprano pipistrelle bats (Pipistrellus pygmaeus) were found in the roof voids, and the species were confirmed by DNA analysis. Externally, the house had slightly separated roof tiles below the chimney, that were gaps of limited extent, with no obvious access points or potential roost features suitable for bats found.*

The PRA survey findings suggest that historically the property was likely used as a day roost and/or transitional roost by an individual or small numbers of non-breeding brown long-eared (Pl. auritus) and soprano pipistrelle (P. pygmaeus) bats and that previously used access points at the south-western gable end have been unintentionally lost by maintenance works. Considering the droppings noted and the setting, the detached house was assessed to be a confirmed historic roost for at least two species of bats and is currently classified as low potential suitability for bats.

Whilst the survey findings demonstrate that the proposals will not impact on any identified potential roost features and are highly unlikely to result in the death, injury or disturbance of bats; the damage or destruction of a bat roost; or the obstruction of access to a bat roost an informative will be applied to ensure that any potential impacts on bats are appropriately addressed, and that any necessary mitigation or further survey requirements are adhered to in accordance with relevant legislation and best practice guidance

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.

Conclusion: For all the above, the proposal is acceptable, and the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Not Required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	9 June 2026
Earliest date for decision:	13 May 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	12.06.2026