



Planning Statement

3 Bath Road, Sonning, Reading, RG4 6SZ

Householder Application – Front, Rear & Side Elevational Changes & Extensions

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 I am instructed by the owners of 3 Old Bath Road in connection with several changes they wish to make to the dwelling through a householder planning application.
- 1.2 The drawings reproduced in this Statement are courtesy of Countryside Designs. Please refer to drawing pack no. 412 for both existing and proposed layouts and elevations.
- 1.3 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans, drawings and documents.

2.0 THE SITE & THE SETTING

- 2.1 3 Old Bath Road is located on the south side of Bath Road in a residential area that was generally developed prior to 1968 and falling within the settlement of Sonning. The southern side of Old Bath Road is characterised by large, detached family homes, set in substantial plots, many of which have already been extended or redeveloped.



Fig.1 – 3 Old Bath Road: Location



Fig.2 – 3 Old Bath Road: Site

- 2.2 The plot is large (0.23 hectares / 0.57 acres) with the 5-bed dwelling occupying the full width of it over two storeys. The GIA of the existing house is 272m² (GF: 153.3m² + FF: 118.7m²). There is parking for eight cars. The dwelling is set back from the road in line with neighbouring dwellings. Neighbouring houses to the north-east and south-west benefit from having been extended.



Fig.3 – The setting, courtesy of Haslams

- 2.3 Site photographs show the house to be built of brick with tile hanging sections to the front and rear under a plain clay tile roof. Windows and doors are uPVC with the front door being painted timber. The windows are leaded in a diamond pattern. The property benefits from mains drainage, water, gas and electricity.



Fig.4 – Front elevation (February 2026)



Fig.5 – Rear elevation (February 2026)

- 2.4 3 Old Bath Road is located within a bat roost area and a landscape character area (Woodley-Earley Settled & Farmed Clay). The Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (Nov 2019) identifies this area (J4) as being densely settled with a strong urban and suburban character and with some pockets of open space. It is also within the AWE 12km consultation zone.
- 2.5 There are no TPOs on site and the building is not listed. Whilst the dwelling is within the built-up boundary of Sonning, it lies outside the Sonning Conservation Area. The site is within flood zone 1.

3.0 THE PROPOSALS

3.1 The proposals involve the following additions to the dwelling:

- Front elevation: 2 no. 2-storey gable extensions & a raised ridge height with a dormer window in the roof
- Rear elevation: a single storey ground floor extension & 2nd-storey infill extension of the south-eastern part; 2 new dormer windows & a balcony
- Side elevation (north-east): a single storey extension

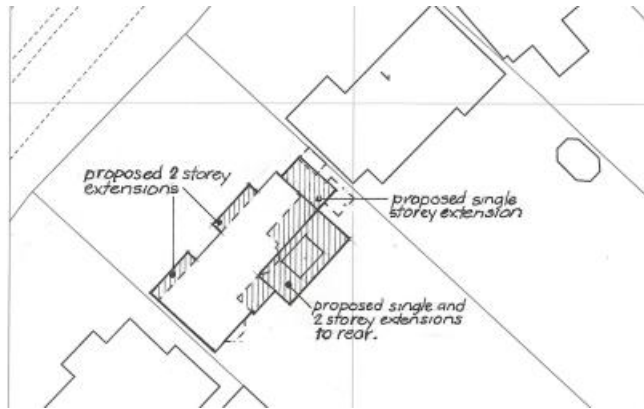


Fig.6 – Extract from Proposed Site Plan

3.2 The proposals deliver an increase in the GIA as follows:

FLOOR	EXISTING m2	PROPOSED m2	DIFFERENCE m2
GROUND	153.3	260.5	+107.2
FIRST	118.7	175.0	+56.3
LOFT	0.0	14.5	+14.5
TOTAL	272.0	450.0	+178.0

Front Elevation



Fig.7 – Front elevation existing



Fig.8 – Front elevation proposed (size comparative)

- 3.2 The proposal would involve widening the existing two front gables and projecting them forwards by 1m to create dynamic visual interest and add depth to the façade. The symmetry of the gables adds a sense of rhythm and allows prominence to be brought to the main entrance which currently regresses into the building, appearing diminutive and lacking in importance. The chimney pots would be removed.
- 3.3 The ridge height of the roof will be raised from 7.6m to 9.2m, allowing for the creation of a full height first floor with additional storage space in the roof and a new dormer. The eaves height of the main roof will increase from 3.2m to 5.1m. Raising both the ridge and eaves heights will more closely align the height and appearance of the dwelling with the neighbouring properties. Please see Fig. 3 for reference.

Rear Elevation



Fig.9 – Rear elevation existing



Fig.10 – Rear elevation proposed (size comparative)

- 3.4 Rear elevational changes are again designed to simplify the façade and deliver consistency of form to a house that has had some historic external changes.
- 3.5 The focus is on infilling and extending the south-eastern section of the house which currently narrows significantly compared to the width of the house to the south-west.
- 3.6 Two additional dormer windows are proposed at roof level and a ground floor single storey kitchen / dining / family room extension. At first floor level, a balcony to the master bedroom and an extension across the rear of what will be bedrooms 3, 4 and 5 squares off the rear façade of the house. A gabled extension to bedroom 2 articulates the façade, creating interest and punctuation. The chimney pot and games room bay window will be removed.

Side Elevation (north-east)



Fig.11 – Side elevation existing



Fig.12 – Side elevation proposed (comparative)

- 3.7 The proposals simplify an awkward side view of the dwelling, bringing alignment of roof forms and a stepping down in height from the primary structure to both the side and rear additions. A door to the downstairs WC, cloakroom and plant room and a small toilet window would be the only proposed glazing on this elevation. The chimney pot will be removed.

Layout

- 3.8 At ground floor level, the proposals remove the rear bay window to the games room, the front bay window to the breakfast room and the adjacent stand-alone brick store. They bring forward the front garage elevation so that the entrances to both garages sit in line with each other as currently, the garage doors are slightly stepped back. The existing living room will become the front entrance and hall, the stairs will be relocated to where the downstairs WC is, the kitchen will become a study and the breakfast room will become the utility. The rear of the ground floor will be infilled to provide a larger, more useable kitchen / dining / family room which will look to the rear of the dwelling. The existing attached store will be extended to provide a combined cloakroom, WC and plant room. The layout becomes significantly more logical with all the habitable rooms overlooking the rear of the property and providing access to the garden.
- 3.9 At first floor, the proposals maintain a 5-bed layout but with all the bedrooms being located along the south-eastern (rear) elevation and increasing the number of bathrooms from two to four. A rear balcony to the master bedroom is proposed. This would be forward of any of the windows on the neighbouring dwelling's south-western elevation and will therefore not impact their residential amenity.
- 3.10 The increase in roof height facilitates useable loft storage.
- 3.11 No additional parking spaces are proposed.

Materials

- 3.12 The additions to the house will employ the existing materials, i.e. clay roof tiles, red facing brickwork, plain hanging clay tiles, white uPVC windows (plain rather than leaded) and a timber front door. The only new material being introduced will be the rear glazed doors to the family room, lounge and gym / games room which will be black powder coated aluminium. The new kitchen window on this elevation will also be powder coated aluminium in black to match.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The planning history dates to pre-1998. Details of application references 40091 and 40146 are not available on-line. Given the existing layout it is assumed that various extensions were approved, but it is not possible to confirm what these might be without visiting the Council offices.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

Wokingham Borough Council Development Plan

- 5.1 Wokingham Borough Council's Core Strategy forms the basis for local planning policy and, as part of which, the principle of residential dwelling extension within the built-up area is accepted.

Sonning Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.2 The independent examination of the Sonning Neighbourhood Plan has concluded with the examiner finding that the Plan meets the required conditions, with recommended modifications, and has been cleared to proceed to a local referendum. Whilst it has not yet been adopted as part of Wokingham Borough Council's Development Plan, some weight must be attributed to the policies contained therein.
- 5.3 Policy SNP/DES1: Design Codes requires development to respond positively to the character area typology it falls within and the design principles of the Sonning Design Guidelines and Codes Report.
- 5.4 For character area J4 – Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay – the guidelines require the protection of the open land separating Sonning, Woodley and Charvil, whilst development of the built-up areas should enhance the sense of place through careful design. The proposals have been designed to accentuate the nature of the original dwelling using similar materials whilst creating a large family home that is fit for purpose. The Old Bath Road context allows for variations in style with the southern side being home to a ribbon of large family homes.

Sonning Parish Design Statement

- 5.5 The dwelling falls within the area to the south of the A4, South Drive and Sonning Meadows, sub-divided under Holmemoor Drive and the Old Bath Road. Houses here were generally built in the 1950s and 1960s and were individually designed homes built on plots of between a quarter and half an acre. The subject site at 0.57 acres is slightly larger than average. The Statement confirms there is little consistency of design, but that homes are generally two storeys and brick-built.
- 5.6 Identifying the design principles of relevance to the proposals, we would cite the following:
- New buildings should respect the scale, massing and height of neighbouring properties and seek to create an appropriate balance between building scale and plot size.
 - Reference should be made to locally distinctive details, with interest and variation in elevations. For example, the use of recesses, brick patterning, flint-work and corbelling between courses on brick elevations.
 - Where brick is the chosen material for walls, the colour and texture should respect the local material which sets the tone for much of the village. Care should be taken to ensure that joints on new brickwork reflect the thickness, pointing style and colour of those to which they are adjacent.
 - Modern usage of traditional materials should be encouraged in particular to match with existing slate and clay tile roofing. The roof pitch, if practical, should also harmonise with these of neighbouring properties.

Redevelopments and extensions:

- Brickwork should be retained in its original style, and consideration should be given to the use of matching second-hand bricks where these are obtainable. Re-pointing should be carried out to match the original in style and colour.
- When windows and doors are replaced it is important to retain the design and glazing pattern of the original house.
- Roof lines and styles should match the existing and respect those which are adjacent. The use of second-hand clay tiles (or slates where appropriate) should be considered. Care should be taken with details such as soffits, bargeboards and guttering.

Character area: South of the A4, South Drive and Sonning Meadows:

- Proposals for extensions or additions should maintain the general scale of the existing dwellings and the materials used should harmonise with the surrounding properties.
- All of the above are low density or very low density areas with mainly large houses in substantial gardens. In any future developments, careful consideration should be given to maintaining the individual characters of the various areas. In particular there is a need to ensure that any new developments respect the existing building lines and that the massing should be in scale with neighbouring properties and have regard to the special character of the particular areas.

6.0 APPRAISAL

- 6.1 The proposals respect the character of the local area which, whilst mainly constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, retains few truly original homes from that period. There are a few along Old Bath Road, but the dwellings which either neighbour or lie in the near vicinity of no. 3 have generally been replaced or extended. That said, the proposals have been designed to reflect the character of the original dwelling in employing original materials (red brick, clay roof tiles and clay hanging tiles). Extensions since the 1950s / 1960s have enlarged the footprint of many of these homes, but have not always been sympathetic to the style of the original dwelling. For this application, the proposals aim to simplify the form of the building, creating a more homogenous and sympathetic design whilst facilitating an increase in the GIA of the building.
- 6.2 The existing building is smaller than its neighbours whilst they all sit in substantial plots. Neighbouring homes design features include flat roofs, extensive footprints, taller ridge and eaves heights, but there is nonetheless a maturity to the consistency of form and mass which fits the road and plot size. Mature landscaping, generally consistent to the properties along Old Bath Road, provides an established setting for the various design differences.
- 6.3 National and local planning policy permits the extension of existing dwellings.
- 6.4 In paying close attention to the Sonning Design Statement, we would like to highlight the following points:
- Balance with neighbouring dwellings may be achieved through the assessment of the submitted proposals, specifically concerning ridge and eaves heights and the proposed footprint, mass and scale.

- The existing elevational treatment is extended into the new proposals, including the use of second-hand bricks and tiles where feasible.
- The replacement windows are not dissimilar to the existing windows, albeit minus the lead effect which was something of a 1950s / 1960s appropriation of a much earlier era. Only at the rear of the property at ground floor level will there be a colour change to the frame. This will not be evident from the public realm.
- The proposed roof line will reflect the existing roof line, albeit the ridge and eaves heights will be raised. Unlike neighbouring dwellings, no areas of flat roof are proposed.
- This will remain a low-density scheme that will be reflective of other local area dwelling renovations.

7.0 ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL CONSULTANCY REQUIREMENTS - BATS

- 7.1 Three dawn / dusk bat emergence surveys have been undertaken by Katie Holmes of Tree Surveys. During all three activity surveys, individual pipistrelle species bats have been seen emerging from various locations on the property. The works to the hanging tiles and roof will result in the damage or destruction of known roosts and a derogation licence from Natural England will be required once planning permission is obtained. Mitigation strategies will be proposed to ensure that no harm occurs to any roosting bats and alternative roost options will be proposed.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 This is a policy compliant application. Given the NPPF presumption for sustainable development we respectfully request that the Council grants planning permission for these proposals.

End of Statement