

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260694
Site Address:	403a Wokingham Road, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 7EJ
Expiry Date:	28 May 2026
Site Visit Date:	15 April 2026
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed dropped kerb to provide vehicular access including lowering kerb stones, reconstructing the footway, and reinstating the pavement to council standards.	

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 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 CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

N.B. Limited weight is afforded to the emerging Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update policies, having regard to their stage of preparation; however, they broadly align with the adopted development plan in respect of parking, green infrastructure and highways safety.

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
	There is no relevant planning history.	

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – Request further information.

External

None.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Objection due to highways safety reasons. See 'Highway Access and Parking Provision' of main report.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	No comments received.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a two-storey semi-detached property located on the northern side of Wokingham Road which is identified as a Green Route Enhancement route.

The property has an unconventional layout with the front garden area adjacent to Wokingham Road and the garage and driveway located to the rear of the property and accessed via Pond Head Lane.

Wokingham Road comprises of largely residential dwellings interspersed with commercial and retail units. There is no uniform appearance to the dwellings along the road, the range in style, age, layout and scale.

Proposal:

This application seeks approval for the installation of a dropped crossing along the front boundary of the site to provide vehicular access and parking to the front of the property. The original low level brick wall was removed prior to the submission of the application.

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 CP6 requires development to provide appropriate vehicular parking, enhance

road safety and avoid highway problems. Accordingly, the acceptability of the proposed access arrangements is a key determining factor in this case. 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:

There is no established character to the dwellings within close proximity to the application site. Properties are diverse and vary in age, form and design. Although, many of the surrounding properties do benefit from many traditional features such as private driveways, front lawns and garages.

This application seeks approval for a dropped crossing along the front boundary of the site to provide access to a front driveway.

CP3 of the Core Strategy states that proposals should be of an appropriate scale of mass, built form and character. The Council's Borough Design Guide (BDG) SPD gives advice on residential developments.

Wokingham Road is identified as a Green Route, where the prevailing character is informed by a sense of openness, landscaped frontages and views into and through plots, rather than by a uniform boundary treatment. Along this section of the road, a variety of front boundary arrangements are evident, including low-level walls, fencing, hedging and open frontages. Many of the properties that retain low-level boundary features benefit from wider plots which allow access to be formed alongside boundary treatments and retained planting.

In this case, the application site comprises a narrower plot, which limits the opportunity to retain or re-provide a boundary feature alongside a compliant vehicular access. As a result, the proposal involves the complete removal of the original front boundary wall, opening the site frontage to the public realm. While this results in the loss of a defined boundary feature, the absence of any replacement structure ensures that the proposal does not introduce built form that would appear visually intrusive or incongruous within the street scene.

Importantly, the removal of the wall would maintain the open character of this Green Route by allowing uninterrupted views into and beyond the plot, consistent with the established pattern of openness along Wokingham Road. The proposal would not create a visually enclosed frontage, nor would it undermine the landscaped character of the wider area.

Having regard to the varied boundary treatments along the road, the constrained width of the plot, and the Green Route objective of retaining visual permeability and openness, it is considered that the proposed absence of a front boundary treatment in this instance is acceptable. The proposal would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the street scene and is therefore considered to comply with the relevant design and landscape objectives of the development plan.

In summary, the introduction of a front driveway and hardstanding would result in some urbanising effect through the presence of parked vehicles. However, given the varied frontage treatments along this section of Wokingham Road, the limited width of the plot, and the retained openness of the site, this change would not materially harm the prevailing Green Route character.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking, Loss of Light & Overbearing:

By virtue of the nature of the proposal, there are no concerns of this nature that would arise from the development. The parking area would be adjacent to the front door area of no. 403b rather than to any principal habitable window, and therefore, would not result in harmful overlooking or loss of amenity.

Highways:

National policy requires that safe and suitable access is achieved, and development should only be refused on highway grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or severe residual impacts on the road network.

Parking provision

The proposal includes changes to the on-site parking arrangements; no changes are proposed to the host dwelling itself.

The council's Highways officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposed level of parking which meet the council's parking standards. They commented that *"The applicant has indicated two driveway car parking spaces on the plan with suitable dimensions. The proposals do not include changes to the existing dwelling, and therefore the level of parking is acceptable"*.

Visibility splays

In consideration of visibility splays, the Highways Officer also requested clarification on whether any boundary treatment would be erected along the front boundary to replace the original brick wall. The applicant confirmed (email dated 20/05/2026) that the front boundary will remain open with no boundary treatment. Therefore, there would be no adverse impact on visibility splays when entering or exiting the site.

Vehicle manoeuvring

The Highways Officer raised concern regarding access to the site. They commented *"As the site is accessed directly off an A-road, it will be necessary for the applicant to demonstrate that vehicles can both enter and exit the site in forward gear. This should be shown via swept path analysis of a large saloon car. It is acknowledged that the site is spatially constrained. In the absence of this information, Highways would be unable to recommend approval on highway safety grounds"*.

While this concern is acknowledged, it is noted that there are already a number of residential properties within the vicinity along Wokingham Road that benefit from front driveways that do not allow a vehicle to enter and exit in forward gear. Examples include nos. 359, 361, 363, 363a and 365, as shown in Figures 1 and 2 below.



Figure 1 – Google Street View (20/05/2026)



Figure 2 – Google Street View (20/05/2026)

In this regard, there is no evidence which demonstrates that that this classified road has a blanket restriction on a dropped kerb if a vehicle cannot turn through 180 degrees on the property. It is, therefore, necessary to make an assessment on the characteristics of the road, the access and the traffic.

In assessing the acceptability of the proposed access, it is recognised that Wokingham Road carries relatively high traffic volumes and is subject to a 40mph speed limit. However, the application site is in close proximity to two reasonably busy junctions along this section of the road. As a result, vehicle speeds in the vicinity of the site are influenced by traffic slowing to access, exit and queue at these junctions, meaning that traffic is likely to moderate vehicle speeds in the immediate vicinity of the application site.

The proposed access would therefore be situated within a section of carriageway where vehicle movements are already moderated by existing junction activity, reducing the likelihood of high-speed vehicle interactions at the point of access. The introduction of a single residential access would not materially alter the existing traffic conditions and as the use of the driveway would be limited to domestic parking associated with the host dwelling, would not result in a significant increase in vehicle movements.

In addition, as no boundary treatment is proposed along the front of the site, the driver of any reversing vehicle would have a reasonable view of pedestrians on the pavement and of vehicular traffic.

In summary, the Highway Authority's concern regarding the absence of swept-path analysis and the potential requirement for vehicles to reverse onto the highway is acknowledged and afforded significant weight. However, the proposal relates to a single dwelling and would generate limited vehicle movements, the frontage is to remain open allowing good intervisibility, and the level of parking provision is acceptable. Having regard to these site-specific factors, it is not considered that the proposal would fail to achieve safe and suitable access or result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety. On balance, the development is therefore considered to comply with Policy CP6, Policy CC07 and the NPPF.

The Highways Officer also commented on the requirement for the access to be appropriately surfaced. This is because it is important for on-site parking areas to be surfaced with appropriate materials in order to avoid escape of loose material onto highway surfaces. As such, a condition will be attached to ensure that the access is surfaced with a bonded and permeable material.

In addition, it will also be necessary and relevant to the proposed development that a condition to remove permitted development rights that would allow the erection of gates along the front boundary are to be removed, to ensure vehicles do not obstruct the highway. Subject to the above, the proposal is considered acceptable in all Highways respects.

The applicant should note that separate consent is required from the Traffic Management Team for extensions to dropped crossings.

Drainage:

The proposal would result in the partial loss of permeable front garden area. However, subject to a condition requiring the use of bonded permeable materials and appropriate construction, the development would not give rise to unacceptable surface water run-off or conflict with Policies CC09 and CC10. The open frontage would retain visual permeability and would not fragment the wider Green Route network in conflict with Policy CC03.

Conclusion:

Overall, the proposal would preserve the open frontage character of this part of the Green Route and would not result in harm to neighbouring amenity. Whilst the Highway Authority's concerns regarding manoeuvring are afforded significant weight, it is concluded that the proposal would still achieve safe and suitable access and would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the development plan when read as a whole and is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

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
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	20 May 2026
Earliest date for decision:	1 May 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	22/05/26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Major Development Location

Green Route Enhancement Route

Maiden Erleigh & Whitegates Ward

Earley Parish