

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250173
Site Address:	31 Copse Drive, Wokingham, RG41 1NA
Expiry Date:	25 April 2025
Site Visit Date:	17/03/2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed garage and loft conversions into habitable accommodation. Plus, the erection of a rear facing dormer, a single storey rear extension, installation of one roof light and changes to fenestration. Following the removal of the existing patio.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

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

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 CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks 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

There is no relevant Planning Application or Planning Appeal History to the current application (i.e. being substantially the same development).

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No objections.
WBC CIL – The proposed development is not CIL liable.
WBC Ecology – 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 comprises a linked-semi-detached bungalow situated within an established residential close. The immediate cul-de-sac is characterised by similarly designed linked-semi-detached properties, contributing to a cohesive streetscape. In contrast, the wider Copse Drive area is predominantly made up of detached dwellings, arranged in discernible groupings defined by recurring house types and architectural features.

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:

Section 4 of the Borough Design Guide SPD advises that dormer windows should generally be positioned within the main roof, by being set back from both eaves line and the sides of the roof.

While the proposed rear dormer extension would be set slightly back from both the eaves line and sides of the roof, it would still occupy the majority of the rear roof slope and, therefore, cannot be considered a subordinate addition to the host dwelling. However, similar rear dormer extensions are evident along this section of Copse Drive, including at No. 25 and a comparable example at No. 35, indicating an emerging pattern of development in the area.

Importantly, the dormer would be positioned to the rear of the property and would not be readily visible from the public realm, thereby limiting its impact on the streetscene. Furthermore, given the linked-detached form of the dwelling, there would be no resulting terracing effect, and the existing green gap between properties would be maintained. On balance, it is considered that the proposed rear dormer would not result in any significant harm to the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

The proposal seeks the erection of a wraparound rear extension, incorporating the partial conversion of the existing garage to facilitate a new kitchen area. As this element of the scheme would be located to the rear of the property and not visible from the public realm, it is not considered to have any adverse impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

The proposal also includes the raising of the side garage roof by approximately 0.7 metres. This modest alteration is not considered to result in any significant visual imbalance to the pair of linked-semi-detached dwellings, particularly as the garage is set well back from the principal elevation and not readily visible from the street scene. Moreover, similar garage roof arrangements can be observed at other properties toward the end of the Close, contributing to a varied roofscape. As such, the proposed alteration is not considered to harm the character or appearance of the area.

The new roof lights on the front elevation are of appropriate design and scale and would not appear as incongruous features in their residential setting. As a result, the new roof lights would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

The new front roof windows would overlook the front driveway and public realm. As these windows would maintain over 10 metres separation from properties across the street any overlooking concerns are minimal.

The new roof level side window would offer glimpsed views into the rear garden area

of the adjacent property no.29 Copse Drive. As this window would serve a non-habitable room, it is recommended that this window is obscure glazed and non-opening below 1.7m in order to minimise any overlooking and loss of privacy impacts. A suitable condition will be attached to any approval.

The views offered from the fenestration proposed on the rear elevation would be positioned over 22 metres away from the primary function rooms of neighbouring dwellings to the rear of the host property. As such, any overlooking or loss of privacy concerns are minimal.

With regards to the new ground floor windows, the existing boundary fencing would be high enough to sufficiently mitigate any overlooking concerns.

Loss of Light and Overbearing:

The proposed development would be suitably located within the application and of modest proportions not to pose any unreasonable concerns of overbearing or loss of light.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed this application and considers that the three off-street parking spaces as shown on the proposed parking plan would be sufficient for a dwelling of this size, and in accordance with the council's Parking Standards. As such, there are no highways issues.

Amenity Space:

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

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 Rotherfield Avenue and Reading Road.

The supporting Bat Scoping Survey (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, February 2025, ref: R2869_PRA_a) found no evidence of bats during the internal and external inspections of the property and garage concludes that the potential for roosting bats is deemed to be low. 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	22 April 2025
Earliest date for decision:	21 March 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	24.04.2025