

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	243077
Site Address:	47 Marks Road, Wokingham, RG41 1NR
Expiry Date:	4 February 2025
Site Visit Date:	19 December 2024
Proposal: Householder planning application for a 1st floor side extension above existing garage, part two-storey part single-storey rear extension, and conversion of garage to habitable accommodation, with change of roof to front elevation to pitch-tiled.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Water Utility Consultation Zones
Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Borough Parishes
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Ground Water Zones
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones
Historic Flooding Points Consultation Zone

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 CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation

and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM10 - Flood Risk DM14 - Ancillary development DM15 - Site History
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
	There is no planning history for the site.	

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Ecology – cannot assess as no bat survey submitted.

External

None consulted.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	One letter of objection (29/12/2024). Concerns include: - The flank wall of the extension extending too close to the shared boundary. - The rear pitched roof being out of character with the local area.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a two-storey, link semi-detached property located on Marks Road, Wokingham. Marks Road is part of a formal suburban development constructed in the 1960s in which properties are street facing and conform to a consistent building line.

Proposal:

This application seeks approval for the erection of a first-floor extension above the existing garage that would have a pitched roof form. The proposal includes the removal of the existing conservatory and a part single-storey and part two-storey rear extension that would have a hipped roof form above the first storey and a flat roof with one roof lantern over the single storey. The ground floor element of the rear extension would measure approximately 9.04m in width and 4.15m in depth. The first-floor element of the rear extension would measure approximately 5.82m in width and 4.15m in depth.

The proposal also includes replacing the existing flat roof porch canopy with a mono-pitch tiled roof and a garage conversion to create habitable living accommodation.

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 principle of a residential extension in this location is acceptable providing that it complies with the wider policy objectives contained within the Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery (MDD).

Character of the Area:

The proposed first-floor side extension would measure approximately 2.58m in width and 6.14m in length. 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.

Some elements of the first-floor side extension follow guidance set out in the BDG in that it would be set back from the principal building line by approximately 0.5m with a lower ridge height than the main roof. Whilst these features support an extension that would appear as subservient to the host dwelling, the extension would extend to the full width of the site boundary. For side extensions, the BDG recommends 'A gap should be retained between the building and the site boundary, and this should be a minimum of 1m in width'.

The BDG further states that 'For properties in formal suburbia, whether detached, semi-detached or short terraces, the rhythm of buildings and the gaps between them along the street frontage is often important to the character of the area'. Whilst it is acknowledged that the first-floor side extension would disrupt the established rhythm of built form, it is recognised that this has already been interrupted by several properties in the road that have already constructed first-floor side extensions above garages that extend up to the shared boundary. Examples include nos.31, 33, 35 and 41. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to refuse this element of the scheme as the precedent has already been set, and the additional built form would not be out of character within the street scene.

The first-floor side extension would adjoin a two-storey rear extension along the northwestern boundary. The extension would extend the full width of the site up to the shared boundary with no.49 Marks Road and would protrude beyond the rear building line by approximately 4.15m. As the flank wall of the extension is built along the shared boundary, this results in the eaves spanning across the site boundary into the site of the adjoining neighbour (see plan RE2). This is a poorly designed feature which is contrary to Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy which states that permission will be granted for proposals that are of a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users.

Whilst the extension has been designed to retain the existing eaves height of the main house and with a lower ridge height, the site and surrounding properties are set within a medium to high density situation. Therefore, the close relationship with the flank wall of the rear two-storey extension along the shared boundary compounds the cramped appearance of the development. It would be an incongruous element due to the scale and massing of the extension sitting so close to the neighbouring boundary and property. It would create an awkwardly proportioned building which would be inconsistent with surrounding properties and would generate a bulky appearance. The proposed hipped roof form of the rear two-storey extension would be out of keeping with the existing simple pitch roof houses in the road. It would create an unsympathetic form of development, particularly when considered in the context of the simple and harmonious roof forms of the neighbouring properties.

Whilst it is noted that the rear extension would be partly obscured from view from the road, it would still hold views from the street scene and from the footpath leading to Sewell Avenue to the east of the host dwelling. Views of the development would contribute to the overall contrived nature of the scheme. Core Strategy Policy CP3 and the NPPF both refer to character as well as visual appearance. The proposal neither relates well to the character or visual appearance of the dwelling.

The single-storey element of the rear extension would have a flat roof form and would have an eaves height within that which is recommended in the BDG. It would not be visible from the street scene and would have no detrimental impact on the character of the host dwelling or street scene.

The proposed garage conversion to create habitable living accommodation would replace the existing garage door with one window. This would be a relatively minor change to the property frontage and would be sufficiently in keeping with other properties in the local area that have already converted garages to habitable space. These include no.67 Marks Road and nos.87, 89 and 103 Clifton Road. Therefore, this element of the scheme would not detrimentally impact the character of local area.

Other changes to the property frontage include replacing the existing flat roof porch with a mono-pitch tiled roof. Many of the dwellings along Marks Road have already made this change, examples include nos.20, 22, 26, 41 and 45. The change would have a minimal impact on the street scene compared to the existing arrangement and the design would contribute positively towards the underlying character and quality of the local area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

There are two additional first-floor windows proposed in the rear elevation to serve a bedroom. The rear fenestration of no.44 Sewell Avenue would be more than 29m away which exceeds the minimum 22m recommended in the BDG. In addition, the proposed fenestration at first-floor level would be similar to the views as existing and would not result in detrimental loss of privacy over and beyond the existing degree shared within the setting and are acceptable. It is normally accepted that some overlooking of gardens by neighbours is inevitable in most medium to high density situations.

Loss of Light & Overbearing:

There is one first-floor window in the flank elevation of no.49 Marks Road, however, this window serves a landing area (non-habitable room), and so any potential overbearing or overshadowing to this window would not substantiate a reason for refusal. There are no windows proposed on the flank elevation of the first-floor side extension or two-storey rear extension.

The 1960s development was designed with properties arranged in a medium to high density situation. Therefore, the close proximity of the neighbouring properties results in the proposed development having a significant impact on neighbouring amenity.

The proposed two-storey element of the rear extension would result in a visually bulkier addition to the rear of the main dwelling. The extension would be positioned along the shared boundary with no.49 Marks Road and is contrary to the 1m minimum separation distance recommended in the BDG. Combining the location of the rear extension and its significant size, the development would be visually intrusive and would have an unacceptable overbearing impact on the occupants of no.49. The cramped appearance would also be exacerbated by the fact that the two-storey element of the rear extension would extend beyond the established rear building line by more than 4m. This results in a scheme which would appear uncharacteristically prominent and dominating within the existing open character of the rear gardens and would convey an undue sense of enclosure to the residential amenity of no.49 Marks Road. The resultant dwelling would be substantially different in scale and bulk from its area context, as well as significantly breaching the layout convention of rear building lines.

Whilst a line of 45 degrees would marginally be breached as a result of the two-storey rear extension, the 45-degree rule of thumb is guidance rather than policy and so is applied on a case-by-case basis. It is recognised that the development would generate additional overshadowing to the garden amenity space directly to the rear of no.49 along the southern side. In this instance, the breach is not considered a robust basis to refuse the scheme given the adjoining built form is the neighbouring garage. In addition, due to the orientation of the host dwelling and neighbouring properties, any overshadowing would be confined to the mornings and the occupants of no.49 would still have adequate access to natural light.

It is noted through aerial images that there are no other two-storey rear extensions of this scale within the immediate vicinity and therefore, approving the scheme would set a precedent for other similar development. Neighbouring Brook Close comprises semi-detached properties set within close proximity to each other in a setting similar to Marks Road. Application F/2007/1430 for a proposed two-storey side extension of similar proportions and form to this application was refused on similar grounds. It was considered that the proposal would be out of character with the street scene as well as creating unacceptable overlooking, loss of light and overbearing impact to adjoining neighbours.

By virtue of the proposed excessive bulk, depth and proximity to the side property boundary to no. 49 Marks Road, the proposed development would create an unacceptable overbearing impact to no.49 Marks Road.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal would increase the number of habitable rooms, however, the property benefits from a large driveway with off-street parking. There are no changes proposed to the current parking arrangements which are acceptable. If the occupants intend to alter the parking arrangements at some point in the future, they should note that the Council's Traffic Management team are not always in support of widening dropped crossings, especially when there is conflict with a lamp column.

Amenity Space:

The Council's minimum garden length of 11m is a generally accepted guideline for private garden space, provided the space is usable. The proposed extension to the rear would retain a garden length of approximately 16m, this is acceptable.

Ecology:

The application site is located in an area suitable for bat roosts. No bat survey was submitted as part of the application. Therefore, insufficient information has been submitted to establish if bats are present on site and what impact the proposed development may have on the protected species.

The Council's ecology officer was consulted and commented that Biodiversity Checklists are not an accepted form of bat assessment. Therefore, there has been a failure to consider wildlife including bat roosts, foraging and commuting in line with Policy CP1 and CP3. A bat survey should have been submitted as part of the application.

Conclusion:

For the reasons set out above, the proposal is considered unacceptable, and the application is recommended for refusal for the following reasons:

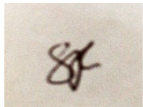
- By virtue of the scale, size, massing and disproportionate design of the proposed development, the proposal would generate a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the main dwelling and the immediate street scene, contrary to Core Strategy policy CP1 and CP3; MDD Local Plan policy CC01 and TB06; the Borough Design Guide SPD and sections 2 and 12 of the NPPF.
- By virtue of the proposed excessive bulk, depth and proximity to the side property boundary to no. 49 Marks Road, the proposed development would create an unacceptable overbearing impact contrary to Core Strategy Policy CP1, CP3, MDD Local Plan Policy CC01, TB06, the Borough Design Guide SPD and section 12 of the NPPF.

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:	Approve
Date:	24 January 2025
Earliest date for decision:	6 January 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	30.1.25