

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252259
Site Address:	149 Victoria Road, Wargrave, Wokingham, RG10 8AG
Expiry Date:	9 January 2026
Site Visit Date:	2 October 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1no dwelling, detached double garage with associated landscaping, parking, EV charging point, cycle and bin storage following demolition of existing dwelling.	

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability 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 CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	CE7 – Low carbon and renewable energy generation C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging HC5 – Environmental protection
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Wargrave Parish Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY

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

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

Original plans

WBC Environmental Health – No objection.

WBC Drainage – Request further information to demonstrate how surface water will be managed.

WBC Highways – Request further information regarding fire tender access.

WBC Landscape and Trees – Recommendation for a site visit.

WBC CIL – CIL liable.

WBC Ecology – No objection, subject to conditions.

WBC Waste Services – No formal comments received.

Revised plans re-consultation

WBC Highways – Request further information. Previous comments still stand.

Retention of existing access points and front boundary treatment welcomed. Submitted visibility splays acceptable. Proposed bin collection point acceptable. Further information regarding fire tender access required.

WBC Landscape and Trees – No comments received.

External

None.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Objection. Concerns relate to: - Overdevelopment of the site. - Recommend conditions if approved: 1. Ancillary garage. 2. Removal of permitted development rights. <u>Officer Comment:</u> The officer has determined that conditions relating to the garage remaining incidental to the host dwelling, and the removal of permitted development rights are necessary in this instance to make the development acceptable.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	Original scheme Ten letters of objection. Concerns relate to: - Unconventional scheme that is incompatible with street scene. - Overdevelopment of the site. - Reads as two separate developments. - Single storey nature and flat roof design of the dwelling is out of character with the area. - Two-storey garages are uncharacteristic in the area.

	- Design of garage with first-floor resembles an annexe or living accommodation. - The plot layout is narrow and creates development which does not integrate with surroundings. - The dwelling has two doors which is unusual and creates the potential to split the dwelling in the future. - Style of the dwelling is out of character. - Dwelling is close to the shared boundaries, including with no. 48 Fidlers Walk. - Loss of vegetation to facilitate development. - No drainage details submitted. - Concern that the owners wish to use Bird Gardens to access the dwelling. - Loss of on-street parking from proposed garage. - West facing windows will create a loss of privacy to the occupants of no. 145 Victoria Road. - Stability/subsidence of neighbouring land following proposed excavation. - Retaining walls not shown on plans. Three letters of support for the dwelling but raise concern relating to: - Bird Gardens being used as the access point in the future. - Subsidence to neighbouring properties following excavation. <u>Revised plans re-consultation:</u> No letters received.
--	--

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a detached, two-storey dwelling located on the northern side of Victoria Road, Wargrave. The site comprises a detached dwelling set within a long plot, plus detached garaged to the rear of the dwelling and two outbuildings/sheds. There are level changes across the site with the front of the plot approximately 3.6m higher than the rear.

The existing dwelling was constructed in the 1960s and is currently vacant and in a poor state of repair.

Victoria Road is characterised by a varied street scene with detached, semi-detached, terraced, bungalows and chalet-style bungalows. While there are many Victorian properties along the road, these are interspersed with newer dwellings of differing ages, styles and forms.

The host dwelling is set back from the road behind a low-level brick wall and benefits from two existing vehicle access points.

Proposal:

This application seeks approval for the removal of the existing dwelling, garage and outbuildings and the erection of a three bedroom, single-storey detached dwelling. To the front of the site a single storey, detached double garage is proposed. Changes to the existing site levels would be required to facilitate the development which include the excavation of soil from the central section of the plot to create a levelled area.

Hard and soft landscaping is also proposed and would include the erection of a 0.6m high wall along the front boundary supplemented with decorative planting and trees. The rear garden would be landscaped, and permeable hardstanding laid to form a driveway, path and external steps to access the lift and dwelling.

Note:

The original submission included a one and a half storey detached garage with accommodation above to the front of the plot. Amended plans were submitted which revised the design and scale of the detached garage to a single-storey, flat roof structure.

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 (MDD) 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 (CS).

TB06 of the MDD Local Plan seeks to avoid inappropriate development of residential gardens where there is harm to the local area. Permission would only be granted where there is a positive contribution to the built form and surrounding spaces, integration with the layout of the surrounding area, appropriate hard and soft landscaping, amenity space, building separation and compatibility with the general building height.

R22 of the Borough Design Guide SPD also notes that backland development must not harm the existing character of the local area, relate positively to the existing layout and urban form, maintain the quality of environment for existing residents and create a satisfactory living environment.

Character of the Area:

Siting and Scale

Policy TB06 states that development should make a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of 'The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area' and should be a layout which 'integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas'.

Many of the properties on Victoria Road were constructed during the Victorian period with newer properties interspersed along the length of the road. Architectural styles

and materials used along the road are varied, with no single prevailing character, contributing to a diverse streetscape. While many of the older period properties are constructed from traditional brick, sash windows and pitched roofs, there have been numerous later additions to the road which include mid-twentieth century housing and more recent schemes.

The existing detached dwelling and garage would be removed to facilitate the erection of a three-bedroom, single-storey detached dwelling.

The existing dwelling was constructed in the 1960s and is modest in proportion and appearance. In its existing form, the dwelling holds limited architectural or historic merit and makes a limited contribution to the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

Victoria Road boasts a mixture of property types in addition to a variation in front setbacks with a degree of variation in architectural style and scale. The front setbacks within the immediate vicinity vary between 2m and 16m and the plot sizes vary between 111m² and 1300m². While many of the surrounding properties display more conventional forms and roof profiles, there is a degree of variation in layout and appearance, such that the area cannot be described as architecturally uniform.

Policy CP3 of the CS 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.

The proposed dwelling would be contemporary in design and appearance and distinct from neighbouring properties. However, local planning policy does not require new development to replicate existing styles. Instead, CS Policy CP3 seeks high-quality design that responds positively to its context.

As existing, the host dwelling is positioned along the same building line as no. 147 and set back approximately 2.8m from no.151. The replacement dwelling would depart from the more conventional location of the property towards the front of the plot, instead, the proposed dwelling would be located towards the rear of the site. The rear portion of the site extends behind no. 147's garden and boasts the widest section of the plot, as well as the lowest level of the site (approximately 3.6m lower than road level).

The proposed arrangement of built form allows the development to respond positively and sensitively to the site's constraints and context, providing a more discreet form of development that responds to its surroundings. The approach also reduces the visual prominence of the contemporary dwelling within the street scene, ensuring that its modern form does not appear dominant or intrusive when viewed from the public realm.

The detached garage positioned at the front of the plot would provide a subtle architectural presence within the street scene. Its contemporary flat-roofed design offers a deliberate and controlled introduction to the modern architectural language of the site, acting as a visual "glimpse" of the development beyond without revealing the full form of the dwelling. This measured approach helps to mediate between the more

traditional character of the road and the contemporary design of the replacement dwelling to the rear.

In terms of scale, the proposed dwelling would result in an increase in the building footprint when compared with the existing dwelling. This increase arises primarily from the proposed single-storey form, replacing the existing two-storey dwelling, and is therefore a direct consequence of redistributing floorspace horizontally rather than vertically.

Notwithstanding the increase in footprint, the overall scale and massing of the proposed dwelling are considered acceptable. Objections have been raised regarding the proposed single-storey and flat roof design of the building being out of character with the surrounding properties. While the predominant house type along the road is for two-storey dwellings, adjacent to the site and further along the road are examples of bungalows and chalet-style bungalows. Therefore, the proposed single-storey dwelling would be sufficiently in-keeping with the already established single-storey accommodation found along the road. In addition, the single-storey flat roofed form would result in a significantly reduced overall height and overall vertical presence when compared with the existing dwelling. As a result, the development would appear less assertive within the surrounding context, with a lower visual profile that would sit comfortably within the site.

From a visual perspective, the reduced height and single-storey form would soften the presence of the dwelling within the street scene and when viewed from adjacent properties. The proposal represents a more balanced and proportionate form of development than a taller replacement dwelling of a similar floorspace, and the increased footprint is not considered to result in harm to the character or appearance of the area. While the scheme would introduce a contemporary dwelling that is different in character from others along the road, it is of high design quality and sensitively sited. The combination of the rear positioning, limited height and carefully considered frontage treatment, ensures that the development would integrate acceptably within the settlement and would provide an acceptable relationship with its surroundings.

In addition, the proposed single storey living accommodation would contribute towards the creation of an inclusive and sustainable community and thus, comply with CS Policy CP3. The single-storey layout with access lift would create a dwelling that is inherently accessible, offering accommodation that can be easily adapted to meet the changing needs of occupants over time.

In particular, the absence of internal stairs, addition of an external lift, and the provision of level access throughout the dwelling make it suitable for a wide range of users. These include elderly people, individuals with reduced mobility, and families seeking a flexible living environment. This aligns with the objectives of inclusive design and promotes housing choice within the settlement, helping to meet the long-term community needs without reliance on future structural alterations.

The contemporary design does not undermine these objectives; rather, it enables a functional and adaptable internal arrangement while maintaining a modest scale and low profile. The proposal, therefore, supports the principles of sustainable communities

by ensuring the dwelling can remain in use as the occupant's circumstances change, reducing the need for relocation and supporting social cohesion within the area.

Materials:

The proposed dwelling and garage would be constructed from high-quality materials which include black facing brick, vertical timber cladding and black metal coping. The dark brickwork and coping would help the buildings to visually recede into their surroundings, as well as the timber cladding naturally weathering over time to further embed the building into its setting.

By virtue of the low level of the main dwelling, the proposed green living roof would soften the buildings presence when viewed from the public realm with the roof merging with the surrounding natural environment.

Due to the contemporary nature and distinctiveness of the proposed materials, it is reasonable and necessary to condition that samples and details of the proposed materials are supplied to the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development to ensure the external appearance of the buildings are acceptable.

Front boundary

The variation in individual frontage treatments is recognised along Victoria Road, however, there is a semi-verdant character and appearance to the road which is assisted by a predominance of soft planting and low-level fencing/walls. The proposal would locate a detached double garage close to the front boundary with a replacement low-level front wall (approximately 0.6m in height) and decorative planting and trees. The proposed design would be in-keeping with surrounding properties and would contribute to the established character along the road which would help integrate the new development into the existing urban form.

Garage

A number of objections were received which related to the one and a half storey garage located to the front of the plot. Concern focussed on the design of the garage appearing as a second dwelling by virtue of the first-floor accommodation, rather than appearing as a subordinate building to the host dwelling.

The applicant considered these concerns and subsequently submitted revised plans (01/12/2025) which amended the design and form of the proposed garage. Following the accepted revised plans, a re-consultation was carried out. No objections from third parties were received following the re-consultation of the amended garage design. It will be necessary to condition that the garage is retained as parking and may not be used for any business nor as habitable space.

Over-development:

Several local residents and the Local Parish raised objection to the proposal being an 'overdevelopment' of the site. By the reasons set out in this report, the proposed development would not be deemed as 'overdevelopment' of the site. The proposed plans accord with local plan policy by providing sufficient remaining amenity space, would not be excessive in terms of demands on infrastructure and services, satisfy parking standards, separation distances and is of a satisfactory scale. Therefore, the horizontal spread of the building is considered appropriate to the scale of the plot.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

The proposed dwelling would be single storey with ground floor fenestration in all elevations. There would be ten windows in the western elevation to serve habitable and non-habitable rooms. A letter of objection was received due to the west facing windows creating a loss of privacy to the occupants of no. 145. To the west of the site is the rear section of no. 145's garden. The neighbouring property benefits from a substantial garden length of approximately 56m, and the house more than 17.5m to the south. In addition, the proposed dwelling would be set down approximately 3.6m below the ground level of the neighbouring property with fenestration no higher than ground floor level. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed western fenestration would not generate any detrimental overlooking impact to the adjoining property.

There would be seven windows and doors in the eastern side elevation to serve a kitchen/living room, hallway and bedrooms. To the east of the site is the parking area and flank wall of no. 3 Bird Gardens which would be between 2.7m and 6m away. The BDG does not provide recommended separation distances for flank-to-flank elevations, however, when applying the guidance for flank to boundary, the proposed development would exceed the recommended 1m minimum distance. In addition, no. 3 Bird Gardens has only one first-floor side facing window that serves a bathroom. As this room is non-habitable, there are no concerns of any harmful loss of privacy that would be generated by the proposed fenestration in the eastern elevation.

The front elevation of the dwelling would include the front entrance and one set of patio doors to serve the kitchen/living room. This fenestration would face directly onto the host garden and proposed detached garage to the front of the site. Thus, no detrimental overlooking impact would be generated to neighbouring amenity.

In the rear elevation of the proposed dwelling, there would be one window and one set of patio doors to serve an ensuite bathroom and bedroom. The proposed fenestration would be more than 12m from the rear boundary and more than 20m from the rear fenestration of nos. 47 and 48 Fidlers Walk. Page 47 of the BDG recommends that a minimum 22m separation distance should be retained between back-to-back elevations to maintain privacy. It is acknowledged that the proposed scheme would fall marginally below the recommended 22m, however, page 47 of the BDG also recommends that a garden length of 11m is a generally accepted guideline for private garden space. The proposed replacement dwelling would retain a garden length to the rear of the property in excess of 11m. However, due to the garden lengths of nos. 47 and 48 Fidlers Walk not meeting the 11m length, the overall separation distance falls marginally short of the recommended 22m.

However, this is guidance, rather than policy and it is noted that the rear shared boundary benefits from mature hedging and an established Hazel Tree which provide natural screening of the site. Combining this with the single-storey nature of the development, it is considered that the proposed scheme would not generate any adverse overlooking or material loss of privacy between the rear of the buildings.

In summary, due to the proposed single-storey, flat roof design of the scheme, combined with compliant separation distances from site boundaries, ensures the proposal would not give rise to any unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking.

Loss of Light & Overbearing:

Due to the proposed siting of the replacement dwelling, separation distances to adjoining properties and flat roofed, single-storey accommodation, there are no detrimental impacts of this nature that would arise from the replacement dwelling.

The proposed detached garage to the front of the plot would extend further into the plot than the existing dwelling and would be adjacent to the rear garden of no. 151. The garage would have a flat roof form with a maximum height of approximately 3.56m and would be more than 4.6m from the flank wall of the adjoining neighbouring property. Due to the significant separation distance and flat roof design, no adverse overbearing or overshadowing impacts would be generated by the introduction of the garage.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal includes changes to the existing parking arrangements and a replacement garage. The proposed garage would include two vehicle parking spaces, electric vehicle charging point and two spaces for cycle storage. The council's Highways officer was re-consulted following the submission of the revised plans. They raised no objection to the proposed front boundary treatment and submitted Visibility Splay Plans (AT - 078 - P28 and AT - 078 - P29). They also confirmed that the proposed level of onsite parking is acceptable to serve the development, and the proposed bin collection point complies with the Manual for Streets

They maintain concern relating to a fire tender vehicle entering and leaving the site in forward gear to within 40m reach to the furthest point of the dwelling. They commented:

"While the applicant has provided a proposed fire access plan indicating the 60m radius from the rear of the fire tender, it does not comply with the latest Building Regulations (Approved Document B)".

Therefore, the applicant is advised to contact the council's Building Control Team to ensure compliance is achieved.

Amenity Space:

The application site benefits from a significant garden depth in excess of 81m. The Council's minimum garden length of 11m is a generally accepted guideline for private garden space, provided the space is usable. The proposed development would retain a central garden located between the garage and host dwelling of approximately 21m. The central section would be levelled and landscaped and would provide a rectangular, flat area of approximately 14m in length. This is considered acceptable to serve the development. In addition, there would be further garden space to the rear of the dwelling that would measure in excess of 11m and would provide additional outdoor amenity space for the occupants of the host dwelling.

Flooding and Drainage:

A number of objections were received highlighting concern that a lack of drainage details had been supplied to support the application.

The application site slopes downwards towards the rear of the site with the rear approximately 3.6m lower than road level. The council's Drainage officer was consulted and outlined that the front (south) of the application site is within flood zone 1 with a low risk of surface water flooding, whilst the northern (rear) of the site is within land which experiences a high risk of surface water flooding and high groundwater levels.

A Proposed Drainage Layout Plan was submitted during the application process. Following a review of the plan, the council's Drainage Officer maintained that further information is required to demonstrate that the proposed drainage system will be appropriate for the proposed development. Therefore, it is necessary and relevant to the proposed development that a condition is attached to secure precise drainage details prior to the commencement of development.

Landscape and Trees:

A number of objections were received that highlighted concern regarding the change in levels across the site. In particular, if retaining walls are proposed, the potential instability that may be caused to surrounding land following excavation works. These concerns are noted and will be covered by a landscaping condition – see paragraph below.

The application site benefits from a number of shrubs and trees, none of which are protected. The council's Trees and Landscape officer was consulted and highlighted that the two boundary trees (T1 Hazel and T2 Walnut) should be retained in order to provide screening to the proposed dwelling from neighbouring properties. They also highlight that the final form of the soft landscaping would be critical to ensure the proposed development relates to its surroundings. As no details of a soft landscape scheme have been submitted, it is reasonable and necessary that hard and soft landscaping, and the protection of trees (to include an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works) are conditioned with any grant of approval. The details to be supplied must include any retaining walls that would be required to facilitate the development.

Ecology:

The application site is located in an area that contains suitable bat roost habitat. A Bat Survey was submitted to support the application (Arbtech, PEA and Roost Assessment, 11 August 2025). The report summarised that no evidence of roosting bats was identified in building B1 (host dwelling), building B2a (brick-built garage), building B2b (timber outbuilding) or building B3 (timber shed), with all four buildings being classified as 'negligible habitat value for roosting bats'.

The ecologist concluded that no further surveys are required, however, in the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development, all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice.

Permitted Development Rights:

The proposal seeks permission for a replacement dwelling which, by virtue of its increased footprint and overall site coverage compared to the existing dwelling,

represents a more intensive form of development within the plot. While the principle of a replacement dwelling is considered acceptable, the enlarged footprint reduces the remaining undeveloped area of the site and limits its capacity to accommodate further extensions or outbuildings.

In this instance, the unrestricted exercise of permitted development rights under Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) could allow for additional extensions, roof alterations and/or outbuildings which, cumulatively with the approved dwelling and garage, may result in a form of development that is visually intrusive, detrimental to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area, and potentially harmful to residential amenity.

Given the increased footprint of the dwelling and the sensitivity of accommodating further built form on the site, it is considered necessary and reasonable to remove specified permitted development rights in order to retain control over any future alterations.

The removal of permitted development rights is therefore justified in this instance and meets the tests set out in the NPPF and is considered necessary to ensure the long-term acceptability of the development.

Conclusion:

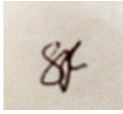
For the reasons set out in this report and subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable in principle as it complies with local policy, the NPPF, local guidance and is recommended for approval.

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:	Approved
Date:	24 November 2025

Earliest date for decision:	21 October 2025
------------------------------------	-----------------

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	7.1.26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Insert where relevant

Modest Development Location

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability

Landscape Character Assessment 2019 - Wargrave-Twyford Arable Chalk Lowlands

Thames Ward

Wargrave Parish