

MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	253143
Address:	44 Sturges Road, Wokingham, Wokingham, RG40 2HE		
Proposal:	Householder application for the proposed erection of a part single storey part two storey side and rear extensions, loft conversion to create habitable accommodation including rear facing dormer window, enclosing of existing porch structure plus changes to fenestration.		
Heritage Asset:	Murdoch Road Conservation Area 44 Sturges Road – NDHA Setting of other NDHAs on Sturges Road Listed building along with conservation areas are classed as designated heritage assets under the NPPF (Dec 2024) and in the Council’s Local Plan policies.		
Site Visit Made:	Yes, external only		

Summary Of Recommendations

Objection – amendments required

Comments On Proposal

The application proposes the extension and alteration to no. 44 Sturgess Road, a semi-detached early 20th century dwelling house located within the Murdoch Road Conservation Area – a designated heritage asset. Through its age, the architectural and historic interest as well as the positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, no. 44 (together with the attached neighbour no. 42 (and other buildings within the setting)) is identified as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). Given the host and context, it is important that any proposed alterations are appropriate and sympathetic to the historic setting.

It is proposed to extend and alter the building with a single-storey and two-storey ‘wrap around’ extension to the side and rear, with a large box dormer on the rear roof pitch as well as the enclosing of the extant porch.

When considering side extensions within the CA, the separation between the dwellings is crucially important. Many of the Edwardian semi-detached dwellings on Sturgess Road were specifically planned with the side separation between the

buildings. This was for two reasons – functional, the ability to access the rear of the property, and aesthetic, to allow the paired dwellings to be read clearly and separately. Due to these factors side extensions which extend to the full width of the plot, especially those at first floor level (i.e. two-storey extensions) would not be considered appropriate due to the physical and appreciable closing down of the gap. In this case, however, the proposed two-storey element is sufficiently set back from the front elevation, combined with the retained side access to the rear, to provide an acceptable gap between no. 44 and no. 46. Related to this, there are no concerns over the lean-to bin store due to the size and form.

In general terms, the proposed design reflects the host appropriately, however the fenestration detail requires further refinement:

- The side windows should seek to replicate the extant side windows in proportion and detail, specifically the size ratio, the arched header and the separation between door and window (it should not be read as a side light).
- The rear ground floor window should ideally be of the same proportion as the above (i.e. be lowered) however due to the position of the proposed sink/countertop, this would not be possible, the window should, however, have arched header as per the others and noted above.

Box dormers are not generally acceptable in the historic environment as they fail to respond the architectural integrity of the building and erode the design interest. And whilst they do exist, where proposed they are resisted due to this harm. In this case, the proposed box dormer would seek to dilute the architectural interest of not only the host, but that of the attached neighbour resulting in a contorted and bulky appearance. An appropriately designed modestly sized pitched dormer in an Edwardian manner would be acceptable here, along with a conservation rooflight if required. Such as this example:



No other concerns are raised to the rear/side proposals of the application.

In regards to the proposed enclosing of the front porch, this would result in an adverse impact upon the architectural interest of the building, along with the attached neighbour. Edwardian houses were typically built with porches, as to allow for shelter from the weather whilst opening the front door etc. - similar designs can be seen up and down Sturgess Road. The open porch is an integral part of the overall design of the building, which is reinforced by the immediately adjacent no. 42. The enclosure of no. 44's porch would seek to unbalance the symmetrical pair and erode the interest of the NDHA, this in turn would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. No. 44 also appears to have the original Edwardian front door – an important architectural element of the building and thus streetscape.

Materials are critically important, with the new brickwork to match the Edwardian red brick, and to be laid in a Flemish bond and buff hue of mortar.

To summarise, the proposals, as currently presented, are not acceptable in design terms due to the adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the NDHA, and Conservation Area. For the application to become acceptable from a design and heritage perspective, the following changes are required:

- Omission of the proposed porch enclosure.
- Minor alteration to the fenestration form and aperture (arched header) detail.
- Change from box dormer to smaller traditional pitched dormer, along with additional conservation style rooflight (if required).

Provided these amendments are forthcoming, the objection can be overcome, however if these changes are not forthcoming, refusal would be advised based upon harm to the significance of the Conservation Area.

Conditions

Materials – to be advised upon in due course.

Date:	12/02/2026	Signed:	Roderick McDonald Built Heritage Officer
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