

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242085
Site Address:	95 Hyde End Lane, Spencers Wood, Wokingham, RG7 1ES
Expiry Date:	9 October 2024
Site Visit Date:	23 August 2024
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a two storey side extension, single storey front extension, single storey rear extension, loft conversion along with 1No dormer to create habitable accommodation, roof alterations and changes to fenestration.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Countryside (CP11)
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone – Green and Amber Risk Zones
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Strategic Development Location – South of M4
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) National Design Guide
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP19 – South of M4 Strategic Development Location
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

Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List
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PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
No relevant planning history for the site.		

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – Request further information (see below)
WBC Ecology – No comments received
WBC CIL – Development is CIL liable

External

None consulted

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	The proximity of the box dormer to the neighbour's chimney and the overlooking from height of the neighbour's garden are of concern. A requirement for obscured glass is suggested for the latter.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a modest two-storey semi-detached dwelling located on Hyde End Lane, Spencers Wood. The dwelling is one of a pair of narrow Victorian-era semi-detached dwellings that have retained their original built form when viewed from the roadside.

Additional development is largely concentrated to the rear of the properties that also benefit from generously deep gardens. The application site is also a slight anomaly in the street scene as a result of its wide side garden that includes 2no. separate access gates.

The character of Hyde End Lane is characterised by several of these Victorian semi-detached dwelling pairs and small terraces. Those dwellings that have been altered/extended have done so modestly as to avoid misbalancing the symmetry of their original built forms.

The site is located within the designated Countryside and also within the South of M4 Strategic Development Location.

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 lies within the Countryside as designated in the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy. Core Strategy policy CP11 states, in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except in certain circumstances. These exceptions are:

- 1) It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
- 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
- 3) It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or
- 4) In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;
- 5) In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:
 - i) Bring about environmental improvements;
 - or ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
- 6) Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building;
- 7) Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

Criterion 4 is relevant in this instance. Whilst these points will be expanded further in the Character of the Area section below, the proposed development more than doubles the original footprint of the host dwelling and the proposed two storey side extension exceeds the width of the original dwelling, misbalancing the symmetry of the semi-detached dwelling pair it would form part of. The width of the site's frontage would also allow for undisturbed views of its excessive massing that does not relate well to the host dwelling or the prevailing rural character of the area.

Overall, the proposals would result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building and are therefore contrary to CP11.

The site also lies within the South of M4 SDL. Whilst not strictly relevant to extensions to existing residential dwellings, Policy CP19 of the Core Strategy requires development within the SDL to be well designed. This is not achieved in this instance.

Character of the Area:

Policy Context:

With regards to well-designed places, paragraph 134 of the NPPF states planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

Similarly, paragraph 139 states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. This is supported by paragraph 125 of the NPPF too, which states:

“Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.”

The National Design Guide section B1, paragraph 67 also states that the built form of well-designed places should relate well to:

- the site, its context and the opportunities they present;
- the proposed identity and character for the development in the wider place;

Paragraph 68 follows on from this stating that houses and streets should establish an appropriate relationship with the pattern, sizes and proportions of existing houses in the local area.

Policy CP11 supports development in the countryside only where it maintains the high quality of the rural environment. Policy CP1(1) similarly only supports development that maintains or enhances the high quality of the environment, with policy CP3 supporting development of an appropriate mass, layout, built form, height and character to the area CP3(a) and which makes a positive contribution to the sense of place contributes to the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings CP3(f).

Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks. The Countryside is defined as a green infrastructure network.

Policy TB21 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council’s Landscape Character Assessment, including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues. Proposals should retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

The Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document provides further guidance for developers with general guidance that development should respond positively to its site and local context. With regards to residential extensions in the Countryside, RD11 of the BDG recommends that a 50% % increase in volume for a

one storey development is acceptable when compared with the original building.

Assessment:

The proposed two storey side extension notably exceeds the width of the original host dwelling. Despite the extension being set back and set down from the ridge and building lines of the dwelling, the overall excessive width, scale and massing of the extension would misbalance the symmetry of the semi-detached dwelling pair it would form part of, to the detriment of the visual amenities of both the dwellings and the prevailing character of the area.

The excessive size and scale of the extension would conflict with section 4.11 of the Borough Design Guide SPD, which states '*alterations or extensions should be clearly subservient to the form and scale of the original building in most situations*', The proposed extension would not be subservient and would be the dominant feature of the property, resulting in an incongruous appearance to the dwelling and unbalancing the semidetached properties.

The Borough Design Guide SPD sets out that replacement dwellings in the countryside should have a volume increase of no more than 50%. Whilst the proposal is not a replacement, the SPD indicates a general uplift in size that would be acceptable. The proposed increase in size would result in a volume increase significantly greater than 50% and result in material harm for the reasons set out.

The existing dwelling and semi-detached properties have a simple form with a pitch roof with gable ends and the proposed development would significantly impact this positive characteristic by resulting in a contrived and complicated building form and design. The dwelling would have a variety of different ridge and eaves heights, building forms and a prominent stepped profile that would be out of keeping with the dwelling and semidetached property. Given the space to the side of the house, these incongruous elements would also be seen from the public realm. It is noted that the property already has rear extensions but the significant side projection of the proposal, along with its size and increased prominence would be appreciably more harmful.

The two-storey side extension exhibits some poorly designed architectural elements such as misbalanced rear eaves when compared to the host dwelling's original roof. There also appears to be no consideration for the dwelling's existing architectural features such as contrasting brick string courses and diaper pattern, nor an attempt to adopt these. The numerous additional roof forms proposed (flat roof dormer, mono-pitch front and rear extensions, mismatched gables) also give the dwelling and incoherent architectural appearance, whereas the current dwelling largely retains the simplistic gable form as the focal point.

Turning to flat roof dormer proposed, its width is significant and its form would be visible from the roadside due to the width of the site's frontage. Combining its form with those aforementioned extensions, the development would be tantamount to an overdevelopment of the original dwelling's form.

Other detailing would also exacerbate the incongruous appearance of the proposal

including the new ground floor window on the front elevation which does not match the proportions of the existing glazing. The proposed single storey side extension that would form a porch, would incongruously overlap the frontage of both the original dwelling's form and that of the extension's frontage.

Summary:

The development as a whole would result in disproportionate increases in massing upon the original dwelling's form that would subsequently misbalance the symmetry of the semi-detached dwelling pair it would form part of, to the detriment of the visual amenities of both the dwellings and the prevailing rural character of the area. The attractive simply gable form has largely been retained in the existing house and the proposal would detrimentally alter this to a complicated and contrived development.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

The changes to the ground and first floor rear fenestration would be acceptable in terms of overlooking. The outlook of the rear dormer would be almost identical to that of the first floor windows (with a minor increase in the arc of outlook) that would not detrimentally harm the privacy of the adjoining neighbours.

The front facing fenestration and rooflights would overlook the vegetated highway verge on the opposite side of Hyde End Lane, this is acceptable.

Loss of Light and Overbearing:

The two storey side extension, despite its massing, would still retain a separation distance of approximately 4.7 metres from the site boundary shared with no.97 Hyde End Lane which mitigates any concerns in these regards.

The majority of the development would be sited to the east of the site and the only changes proposed adjacent to no.93 Hyde End Lane would be the alterations to the existing two storey rear flat roof form with shallow mono-pitch that connects to the main dwelling's roof form. The minor increase in massing would have no harm on no.93's rear elevation in these regards.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The proposal will result in additional habitable rooms and the side extension will affect the existing driveway parking.

The proposed plans indicate three external parking spaces. Although the level of parking is considered acceptable in principle, the layout of the middle parking space is not considered practical and would also obstruct access to the front door.

WBC Highways have therefore requested a revised parking plan. This has not been requested due to concerns on several other grounds but its absence does not warrant a reason for refusal.

Amenity Space:

The proposals would not harm the usability of the site's rear amenity space.

Landscape and Trees:

No vegetation would be harmed by the proposed development.

Ecology:

A preliminary bat roost assessment and accompanying emergence surveys (John Wenman, August 2024) have been submitted in support of this application. The emergence surveys concluded that the proposals are highly unlikely to result in the damage or destruction of a bat roost or lead to the disturbance and or/harm to bats. As such, a European Protected Species mitigation licence is not considered necessary for the works to go ahead lawfully.

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.

Conclusion:

The proposed development would result in material harm and would be contrary to the relevant development plan policies and guidance. It would also conflict with the NPPF and National Design Guide, which puts good design at the heart of sustainable development:

By reason of the development's excessive width, scale, massing and incongruous and complicated design, the proposal would result in disproportionately large and contrived addition to the existing dwelling that would subsequently misbalance the symmetry of the semi-detached dwelling pair, and to the detriment of the dwellings' attractive and simple built form, which is a characteristic of the immediate area. The proposals are therefore contrary to Policies CP1, CP3, CP11 and CP19 of the Core Strategy, policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD, the National Design Guide and sections 12 and 15 of the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Refusal

Date:	17 September 2024
Earliest date for decision:	6 September 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	25.09.2024