

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250200
Site Address:	62 Reading Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3DB
Expiry Date:	7 May 2025
Site Visit Date:	26 March 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed two storey front, side and rear extensions, including the erection of a 2 no. sky lights, single storey rear extension, along with a loft conversion to create habitable accommodation and changes to fenestration. Followed by the demolition of the existing garage.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development Proposals

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 CC02 – Development Limits CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
221557	Full application for the proposed subdivision of the site and erection of a detached 3 no. bedroom dwelling following demolition of existing detached garage, with associated parking.	Approved: July 2022
211529	Full application for the proposed subdivision of the site and erection of a detached 3 no. bedroom dwelling following demolition of existing detached garage, with associated parking.	Approved: July 2021

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Drainage – Request further information
WBC Highways – No objection
WBC Green Infrastructure – No comments
WBC CIL – CIL liable development
WBC Ecology – No comments
WBC Sports Development (Places and Neighbourhoods) – No comments

External

None

REPRESENTATIONS

Woodley Town Council	No objection
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

The application site is located within a residential setting of Woodley. This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a large-scale extension to the existing property, with the main components being a two-storey side and rear extension, a two-storey gable protrusion on the front elevation, a single storey rear extension, and the conversion of the loft.

This submission follows applications 211529 & 221557, which comprised the erection of a new dwelling on the site, in the proximate location of the now proposed extension. These applications were both approved.

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.

Policy CP2 ensures that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities and that planning permission will be granted for proposal that address the requirements of people with special needs, including those with a physical, sensory or learning disability or problems accessing services. The development proposed would create wheelchair access, plus provide facilities such as a sensory and therapy room for a family member ensuring they can live at home alongside their family whilst having the 24/7 care they require. This demonstrates the

adaptation of an existing home to meeting a housing requirement for a person with specific needs and is therefore compliant with CP2.

Character of the Area: As noted within the appraisals of the previously approved applications, this section of Reading Road is characterised by houses of varying designs, setback from the main highway and set within plots of varying widths. There are examples of some properties taking almost the whole width of the plot, with other examples of properties closer to one side of the boundary with a side access. Similarly, the types of dwellings vary along this stretch – both single storey bungalows and two storey detached and semi-detached houses are seen in this area.

The current proposal, although comprising an extension to the main dwellinghouse as opposed to the introduction of a new unit, does not substantially differ from those recently approved applications with regard to the scale of built form proposed. In this regard alone, there would not be reason to object to the proposed scheme.

Notwithstanding the above, whilst it is accepted that the site is capable of facilitating a large increase in mass without detriment to the street scene, the visual impression of a large extension would always be fundamentally different compared to the creation of a new dwelling. As such, an in-depth assessment on the design and form of the proposal is still required, to ensure there would be no harm to the character of the area.

The proposal comprises the introduction of a two-storey gable protrusion along the front elevation of the property. In relation to front extensions, the Borough Design Guide (BDG) specifies that they are generally only acceptable where the building is set further back from the street than the prevailing building line and where they are single storey in height. The extension is partly contrary to this guidance, owing to its two-storey nature. Notwithstanding, each application must be assessed on its own merits and with the context of the area carefully considered. As a result of its modest depth, the extension would not encroach beyond the prevailing building line and would not be an intrusive to the street scene, both of which are underlying factors for such guidance advising against the erection of two storey front extensions. From a design perspective, the proposed gable would simply replicate the two-gable frontage that currently characterises the dwelling, with one of these existing gables being replaced by the new front porch. Accordingly, the front extension would not appear out of place in this context.

The most apparent element of the scheme, especially from views along Reading Road, would be the two-storey side extension. The extension would fail to confirm to the guidance set out in the BDG in that it has been designed to be flush with the host dwelling, as opposed to being set back from the front elevation and set down from the properties ridge. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that new extensions are subservient to the existing built form, thus, to mitigate against bulky developments. Notwithstanding, the context of each application must be considered and each scheme assessed on its own merits. It should also be noted that the BDG acknowledges there may be exceptions to the aforementioned guidance in certain instances. As touched upon within the preceding paragraph, it is clear that the underlying design principle of the proposed scheme is to retain the existing characteristics of the dwelling's frontage, with two gable protrusions being separated by a prominent front porch, essentially creating a mirrored frontage. Alternatively, a subservient rendition of the proposal

would appear unbalanced, and therefore more harmful to the street scene. As such, from a design perspective, the side extension raises no concern.

When looking at the impact upon the spatial characteristics of Reading Road, it is acknowledged that the development would notably reduce the space between the application dwelling and the adjacent property, No.56. When identifying the character of a street scene or wider area, the gaps between buildings can be as important as the buildings themselves, to provide views through, and to prevent a terracing effect. This is however considered to hold less value in this site-specific circumstance, due to existing features of the site, whereby views of the dwelling are already partially screened by a mature tree along the shared boundary with No.56, plus the presence of an existing hedge along the front boundary of the application site. Furthermore, there are already a number of properties within the street that have extended in a similar fashion to that proposed, and incidentally, there are a number of properties that fill the width of their respective plots. As such, the form and scale of the proposed extension would not be dissimilar or out of character with other features in the locality, and the loss of this gap would not be detrimental to the character of the street scene. In any case, the scheme has ensured to retain an adequate separation distance between the extension and the neighbouring property, thus preventing any terracing concerns.

To the rear of the property, a large, two storey, double gable protrusion is proposed, along with a more modest ground floor, flat roofed component. Despite adding notable mass to the rear of the dwelling, the extension would not have a significant street presence. Only limited views of this component of the development would be available from the public footpath running parallel to the front boundary of the site, such that there would be negligible impact on the wider character of the area. However, due to the scale of the enlargements proposed, it is important that the impact upon the dwelling itself is also considered. In this regard, the design of the extension is considered to respond well to the original property and the built attributes seen in the wider area, with an emphasis on gable form being adopted within the development. It seeks to adopt a contemporary spin to the more traditional style of the host dwelling and neighbouring properties, particularly through the large expanses of fenestration, however, this contrast is considered to work well. The gables are notably set down from the ridge of the host property, helping to provide the visual sense of subservience that is of importance given the relatively large scale of the development.

The proposal seeks to utilise external materials and finishes that are a contrast to those of the existing property. These materials, being black framed windows and doors, grey slate roof tiles, and white render for the external walling, would clearly affect the perception of the dwelling within the street scene. Nonetheless, there has been a great degree of personalization to neighbouring properties within Reading Road, such that the contemporary style of the altered dwelling would not negatively stand out amongst its surroundings.

Overall, the proposal would have an acceptable visual impact and would comply with policies CP1 & CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Neighbouring Amenity: An amended site plan has been received that shows how the enlarged dwelling would sit within the immediate building line. It is clear that there would be limited impact upon No.64, given that the single storey rear extension is limited in

height and would be sufficiently distant from the neighbouring site. A greater impact would be felt by No.56, however in this instance, it should be reiterated that the relationship between the enlarged dwelling and the neighbouring site would be notably similar to that of the new dwelling approved through application 221557, where no adverse effect on neighbouring amenities was concluded to be a consequence. As discussed during the appraisal of this previous application, No.56 has two habitable windows facing the application site which will experience a degree of overshadowing from the proposal, however, these are secondary windows, and the subject rooms have main windows to the front which are large enough to allow adequate daylight/sunlight.

With regard to possible overlooking, the proposed first floor windows on the rear elevation of the enlarged dwelling would provide oblique views of neighbouring gardens, however, this would not result in direct overlooking. There are also 2no. first floor side facing windows proposed, however, as these serve non habitable rooms, they pose no added overlooking concerns. The proposed rooflights would not provide an imposing outlook for neighbouring sites.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The Highways Officer has raised no objection in principle to the development, stating that the parking provision provided is acceptable.

Nonetheless, the Officer has requested an updated plan with the gates set back 5 metres from the highway. This appears to be a misinterpretation of the application, as there are no changes to the boundary treatment, with the gates shown on the proposed plans being existing and established features of the site. Accordingly, it would be unreasonable to request these to be relocated.

Flooding and Drainage: The Drainage Officer has raised concern as to the building over an existing watercourse. However, the development would only slightly encroach into the watercourse and these concerns were not raised by the Drainage Officer through the previously approved scheme. As such, it would be unreasonable to withhold planning permission on this basis.

Ecology: A number of ecological surveys have been submitted in support of this application. A series of findings through the initial preliminary bat roost assessment concluded that emergence and re-entry surveys were recommended and have since been undertaken.

It is considered that the survey effort and methodology are adequate to support the Ecologist's conclusion that the findings within the surveys indicate that the house acts as a day roost for common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle bats. The LPA support the conclusion that a European Protected Species Licence from Natural England will need to be obtained before the works commence.

Provided a planning condition is imposed to ensure that development cannot commence unless a bat licence has been obtained from Natural England, then the development will not have a detrimental impact on the favourable conservation status of bats and is in accordance with planning policy.

Conclusion: For all the above, the proposal is acceptable, and the application 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, 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:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	29 July 2025
Earliest date for decision:	2 April 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	30 July 2025