

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	243132
Site Address:	201 Reading Road, Wokingham, RG41 1LJ
Expiry Date:	6 May 2025
Site Visit Date:	17/02/2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling and detached double garage with associated landscaping following demolition of the existing dwelling.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
- Scale and Location of Development Proposals
- Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
- Tree Preservation Orders
- Assessment Area
- Green Routes and Riverside Paths 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 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation

(JMWP)	
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
230026	Application For Works To Protected Tree(S) TPO 1402/2011, T1	Granted, 11/01/2023

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal
WBC Property Services – No comments received. WBC Environmental Health – No comments received. WBC Drainage – No objections, subject to a condition. WBC Highways – Further information requested. WBC Landscape and Trees – Objects to the proposed development (further information requested). WBC CIL – The proposed development will be CIL liable. WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received. WBC Ecology – No comments received.
External
Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received. South East Water – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	The Wokingham Town Council P&T Committee - No comments made.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	199 Reading Road, Wokingham, RG41 1LJ - Requests clarification on whether it will block natural light or cause overshadowing to his living room and two bedrooms. <i>Officer comment: Please refer to the 'Neighbouring Amenity' section of this report.</i> 203 Reading Road, Wokingham, RG41 1LJ - Object to the house being brought closer to their existing property. - Concerns include: - Loss of privacy due to overlooking into their lounge and conservatory. - Further loss of daylight in already limited

	spaces. ○ The new build would be overbearing and claustrophobic due to reduction in the current 6m (20ft) gap between houses. <u><i>Officer comment: Please refer to the 'Neighbouring Amenity' section of this report.</i></u> • Suggest alternative extensions to the rear (250+ ft deep garden) or right side of the property, as seen in neighbouring developments. 2 Aspen Place, Wokingham, RG41 1LE • Requests clarification on garden alterations, which are not detailed in the current plans. • Seeks information on potential overlooking, loss of light, or overbearing impact from the development. <u><i>Officer comment: Please refer to the 'Neighbouring Amenity' section of this report.</i></u>
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APPRAISAL

Site Description and Proposed Development:

The application site relates to a two storey, detached property located in an established residential area. The surrounding area is characterised by detached and semi-detached that vary in design and appearance.

This application initially sought permission for the construction of a new detached dwelling and a detached double garage, along with associated landscaping and the installation of an entrance gate, following the demolition of the existing house and garage.

In response to concerns raised by the Case Officer and neighbouring residents, the proposal has been revised. Key amendments to the design include:

- Removal of the proposed entrance gate and detached garage.
- Reduction of the rear projection from two storeys to a single storey.

The application will now be assessed based on these revised plans.

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.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high quality design.

R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

The application site is located in a spacious residential road which is characterised by a rhythm to the overall layout, with detached houses set in discernible groupings which are distinguished by repeated house type. Well maintained landscaping within front garden areas featuring mature trees and hedgerows contribute to the site's verdant appearance. The area is also characterised by predominant gaps which provides glimpses of leafy green gardens to the rear. The marked feature creates a certain rhythm in the street which makes an important contribution to local distinctiveness.

The proposed dwelling would have dimensions of approximately 13.5 metres in width by 17.7 metres in depth, with a maximum ridge height of 7.5 metres. Although this would result in a building taller than its immediate neighbours, this variation is not considered harmful to the character or visual amenity of the area when assessed in context.

The submitted contextual street scene analysis indicates that the proposed dwelling would sit comfortably within the established roofscape, with its ridge not significantly exceeding that of No. 203. In relation to No. 199 — a single-storey bungalow — the proposed dwelling would be approximately 2.1 metres taller at ridge height. However, it would be positioned around 3.2 metres from the shared boundary and approximately 4.2 metres from the side wall of No. 199. These spatial separations, combined with the hipped roof design and absence of any significant massing along the side elevation, help to mitigate any potential overbearing or terracing impacts.

In addition, Reading Road is characterised by a mix of building types, scales, and roof heights, with varied ridge lines and instances where bungalows sit alongside two-storey dwellings. This variation contributes to the road's visual interest and informal character. The proposed height, therefore, would not appear incongruous or visually dominant in this context, particularly given the plot size and generous setbacks from neighbouring dwellings. As such, the proposed development would be considered acceptable in terms of its scale and massing.

The Character of Reading Road is distinctly varied. There are 'blocks' of properties with a similar character that are of the same period and constructed in the same architectural style and materials, but overall, the road provides a varied, mixed character with a range of property types and styles. The architectural features of the proposed dwelling, including a hipped roof, brick headers, and a material palette comprising red brickwork and a slate roof finish, would align with the character of the surrounding area.

Considering all these points, it is concluded that the new dwelling would not hamper the character of the area in accordance with policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and the guidance contained within section 4 of the Borough design Guide.

Housing Design:

Internal Amenity:

Policy TB07 of the MDD Local Plan and R17 of the Borough Design Guides require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size of new dwellings achieves good internal amenity. The Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard sets out the minimum standard internal space requirements for new dwellings. A minimum standard of 110m² applies for a two storey, 5-bedroom dwelling. The proposal would accord with this requirement.

Double bedrooms should have a minimum area of 11.5sqm, single bedrooms should have an area of 7.5sqm, living spaces a minimum area of 29sqm and there should be provision for storage. The proposed bedrooms meet the required minimum and the combined total of that in kitchen, living and dining room is satisfactory. Sufficient built-in storage space would also be available and the minimum floor to ceiling height would measure 2.3 metres for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area. As such, the proposal would accord with local and national space standards, therefore, is acceptable in this regard.

External Amenity:

Policy TB07 of the Managing Development Deliver Local Plan and Principle R17 of the Borough Design Guide require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity. Principle R16 of the Borough Design Guide requires that rear gardens are at least 11 metres deep and 1 metre set back from the boundary to allow access thereto.

The proposed rear amenity space would comfortably exceed the minimum 11 metre requirement. As such, no objections are raised in this aspect.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

R15 of the Borough Design Guide SPD (BDG SPD) requires the retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms, with separation of 22 metres to the rear and 10 metres to the street for two storey tall proposals.

The proposed front and rear-facing windows at both ground and first floor levels would comply with the minimum separation distances set out in the Council's Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (BDG SPD). While concerns have been raised by both adjoining neighbours regarding potential overlooking and loss of privacy, it is considered that the views from the proposed windows would be comparable to those available under the existing arrangement.

The surrounding residential area is characterised by a linear layout, where a degree of mutual and oblique overlooking between rear gardens is typical. Any new views from the proposed windows towards neighbouring patio areas would be oblique and limited in scope. As such, the development is not considered to result in any unacceptable loss of privacy or overlooking beyond what currently exists.

The proposal would introduce first-floor windows on both side elevations to serve non-habitable rooms and secondary bedroom window. It is recommended that these windows are obscure glazed and non-opening below 1.7m in order to minimise overlooking into the rear garden and patio areas of the adjacent neighbouring properties. A suitable condition will be attached to any approval.

With regards to the new ground floor windows, the existing boundary fencing would be high enough to sufficiently mitigate any overlooking concerns.

Loss of Light:

R18 of the Borough Design Guide SPD aims to protect sunlight and daylight to existing properties, with no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties.

In accordance with the BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice, the 45-degree test taken from the midpoint of the rear patio doors at No.199 Reading Road would not be breached in plan view. As such, the proposed development would not result in a material loss of daylight to this room, as more than 50% of the glazing would remain unobstructed.

It is acknowledged that the proposed dwelling would breach the 25-degree vertical test when taken from two ground floor side windows at No.199. However, the Case Officer has confirmed that these side windows serve as secondary sources of light to a habitable room, which benefits from additional light through a set of front-facing windows and rear patio doors. Therefore, while there may be some reduction in light from the side, the overall level of daylight and sunlight to the room would remain adequate, and no significant adverse impact is considered to arise in terms of residential amenity.

With regard to the neighbouring property at No. 203 Reading Road, the proposed replacement dwelling would be positioned approximately 4 metres away from the south-east side wall of that property. Importantly, the new dwelling would not extend significantly beyond the rear elevation of No. 203 at two-storey height.

Given this level of separation and the limited rearward projection, it is considered that the development would not result in any material loss of light to the

neighbouring property.

Overbearing and sense of enclose:

Following the receipt of updated plans and elevational drawings omitting the previously proposed two-storey rear projection, the proposed dwelling would now be appropriately set back from the side boundaries and would not extend significantly beyond the rear elevations of neighbouring properties. As such, any concerns regarding overbearing impact or a sense of enclosure are considered to be minimal.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Car Parking:

The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed this application and considers that the driveway will be sufficient for at least three driveway parking spaces and in accordance with the council's Parking Standards. As such, there are no highways issues.

Cycle Parking:

Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum cycle parking standards and Policies P2 and P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD ensure that it is conveniently located, secure and undercover and provided where it is compatible in the street scene.

Following the omission of the detached garage, it is considered that secure and covered bicycle storage/ parking facilities should be provided prior to the occupation of the new dwelling so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel in accordance with Policy CP6. A suitable condition will be attached to any approval.

Flooding and Drainage:

The proposed development is located in Flood Zone 1, according to the Environment Agency's flood mapping. The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed the application and noted that no drainage details have been provided, nor has any reference been made to the existing drainage arrangements. Additionally, a small pond lies within the rear garden area; Environment Agency's mapping indicates that this poses a high risk of surface water flooding, with a 1 in 30 annual probability.

Given this and the extent of the new footprint introduced by the proposals, the Drainage Officer has recommended that a condition be imposed requiring the submission of detailed surface water drainage information prior to the commencement of development. A suitable condition will be attached to any approval to address this matter.

Landscape and Trees:

Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing

trees and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.

The site is on a Green Route and subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 1402/2011, T1 an oak on the front boundary of the site. TPO 1197/2007 has been served on various trees at the rear of the site and on adjacent plots. A green back drop is a feature of the houses along the road at this point.

T1 of 1402/2011 is a veteran tree, number 65555, as recorded on the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory.

The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer reviewed the application and initially raised an objection to the previously proposed detached front garage and access gate, noting that the original arboricultural assessment (prepared by Martin Dobson Associates, dated January 2025, Ref: V13) did not adequately assess the impact on the Root Protection Area (RPA) of tree T1.

However, following the submission of an updated block plan on 15/04/2025, the detached garage and front gate have been removed from the proposal, and the agent has confirmed that no alterations are proposed to the front driveway, which will remain as existing – this includes the extensive laurel hedgerow along the front boundary which positively contributes to the character of the area. An updated arboricultural impact assessment, method statement and tree protection plan were submitted on to the LPA on 03/06/2025 to reflect these amendments.

In light of these changes, the Trees and Landscape Officer has withdrawn their objection. Suitable conditions will be attached to any approval to ensure compliance with the updated tree protection measures.

Ecology:

The site is located in habitat which matches where bat roosts have previously been found in the borough and is surrounded by a habitat suitable for use by foraging and commuting bats including large, connected trees that border Reading Road.

The supporting Preliminary Bat Roost Appraisal (Martin Ecology, December 2024) found no evidence of bats during the internal and external inspections of the property and concludes that the potential for roosting bats is deemed to be very low. As such, the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect roosting bats or other protected species.

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:	Approval
Date:	30 April 2025
Earliest date for decision:	29 January 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	23.06.2025