

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

50 TRINDER ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG41 1BH

PROPOSAL: RETENTION OF SINGLE-STOREY LEAN-TO STRUCTURE

APPLICANTS: MS N Y CHAN



DATE: Dec 2025 (REV. 1.0)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by OPS Chartered Surveyors on behalf of the applicant in support of a planning application for the retention of a single-storey lean-to pergola located at the rear of the dwelling at 50 Trinder Road, Wokingham, RG41 1BH.

The pergola was constructed without prior planning approval, and the intention of this submission is to regularise the development by providing a transparent and comprehensive explanation of the proposal. This includes an assessment of the structure's form, function and placement within the site.

The statement sets out the characteristics of the pergola, evaluates its relationship with the surrounding residential environment, and demonstrates that it represents a proportionate and well-integrated addition to the property that accords with relevant planning guidance and established design principles.

2. THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application property is a modern two-storey semi-detached dwelling located within a planned residential estate characterised by a coherent and orderly suburban layout. The surrounding homes share a consistent architectural style, predominantly featuring brick-built elevations, pitched roofs and contemporary domestic design elements typical of recent housing developments in the Wokingham area. This creates a uniform and visually cohesive streetscape, with dwellings set out in regular plots and arranged around landscaped frontages and enclosed rear gardens.

The rear garden of the property forms a private and fully enclosed outdoor amenity space, bounded by a combination of a 2.0-metre brick boundary wall and standard timber fencing that offers clear separation from neighbouring plots. The garden is of sufficient depth and width to accommodate typical domestic features and small garden structures without appearing cramped or overdeveloped. Its proportions ensure that it retains an open and functional character even with the presence of ancillary installations such as the pergola subject to this application.

The surrounding gardens within the estate generally exhibit similar characteristics, with well-defined boundaries, lawned areas and a variety of small-scale domestic structures such as sheds, pergolas, seating areas and lightweight canopies. As a result, the site sits comfortably within a suburban context where modest rear-garden features are commonplace and considered an expected part of the residential environment. The overall setting is quiet, residential and visually consistent, providing an appropriate backdrop for the scale and form of the proposal.



Photo 1: The proposed site and surrounding environments.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The structure is a lightweight, open-sided shelter attached discreetly to the rear elevation, providing a semi-covered outdoor amenity area while remaining visually subordinate to the main house.

The pergola extends 3.6M from the rear wall and spans approximately 4.6M in width, set in by around 800mm from the full width of the elevation. Its roofline is modest in height, with eaves at 2.65M and a maximum height of 2.96M, ensuring it reads as an ancillary and unobtrusive garden structure.

Construction materials include treated timber posts and beams, a clear polycarbonate roof that allows light to pass through, and a white metal frame supporting a translucent retractable fabric screen that can be rolled away when not required. These elements give the pergola a light and adaptable appearance suited to a domestic garden setting.

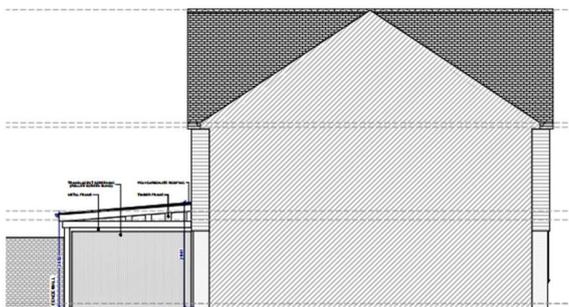
Overall, the pergola is a simple, well-integrated and visually recessive addition that provides practical sheltered outdoor space and sits comfortably within the context of the property and surrounding homes.



EXISTING (PROPOSED) SOUTH-EAST (1:100)



EXISTING (PROPOSED) NORTH-EAST (1:100)



EXISTING (PROPOSED) NORTH-WEST (1:100)



EXISTING (PROPOSED) SOUTH-WEST (1:100)

Photo 2: The existing (proposed) development.

4. DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The design approach for the pergola prioritises visual integration with the host property and the surrounding residential setting. Its form is intentionally simple and unobtrusive, allowing it to read as a natural garden feature rather than an extension of the dwelling. By adopting a restrained appearance and lightweight construction, the structure contributes positively to the overall design coherence of the rear garden without drawing undue attention.

The choice of treated timber as the main structural material reflects the domestic garden context and aligns with the Borough Design Guide SPD, which encourages the use of materials that complement the texture, colour and character of existing residential environments. Timber provides a softer visual quality compared with more robust or engineered materials, enabling the pergola to blend with planting, boundary treatments and the general landscape character typical of suburban gardens. The polycarbonate roof helps maintain a sense of daylight and openness beneath the structure, avoiding the visual heaviness often associated with solid or opaque roofing. As a result, the pergola maintains a transparent, lightweight presence rather than forming a visually bulky addition.

The structure has been designed to remain clearly subordinate to the main house. Its proportions sit comfortably within the scale of the property, and its placement ensures that it does not compete with the architectural form of the dwelling. The Borough Design Guide SPD emphasises that additions should not appear dominant or disrupt the visual hierarchy between the primary building and any ancillary garden features. The pergola achieves this by adopting a modest and low-profile form that sits quietly within the rear garden setting.

Integration with the existing architecture has also been considered. Although the pergola does not seek to replicate the dwelling's materials or architectural detailing, it adopts a neutral aesthetic that avoids visual conflict with the brick-built house. The design achieves an appropriate balance between being distinct as a garden feature while remaining compatible with the overall appearance of the property. Its open-sided form ensures that the structure retains transparency from multiple viewpoints, allowing views across the garden to remain uninterrupted and preserving the sense of depth and space within the plot.

The overall design intention is to provide a functional, weather-protected outdoor area in a manner that respects the existing built environment. The pergola maintains the domestic character of the site, avoids visual clutter, and adheres to the design principles promoted by Wokingham Borough Council, which encourages proportionate, well-integrated additions that enhance the usability of a home without detracting from its appearance. By following these principles, the pergola has been designed to remain sympathetic, discreet and harmonious within its setting.

5. IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

The proposed pergola at 50 Trinder Road has been carefully assessed with regard to its impact on neighbouring amenity, taking into account the guidance set out within the Wokingham Borough Design Guide (Interactive SPD) and the general principles of good neighbourliness expected for domestic extensions. Owing to its modest scale, open-sided design and discreet position within the rear garden, the structure does not result in any material harm to the living conditions of adjoining occupiers.

The pergola is a lightweight and visually permeable structure with an eaves height of 2.65 metres and a maximum height of 2.96 metres, which is significantly lower than the height typically associated with single-storey extensions or enclosed outbuildings. Because the design incorporates an open timber frame and a translucent polycarbonate roof, it does not form a solid mass capable of blocking daylight or casting meaningful shadows across neighbouring gardens or windows. Sunlight and daylight continue to move freely beneath and around the structure, and no part of the proposal has the potential to create noticeable overshadowing or a reduction in natural light for adjacent properties. This approach aligns with the Borough Design Guide's objective that domestic additions should avoid dominating adjoining spaces or undermining the natural lighting conditions of neighbouring homes.

The pergola is visually recessive due to the openness of its structure and the natural materials chosen. The absence of enclosed walls prevents any sense of visual enclosure or overbearing presence when viewed from neighbouring gardens. The subdued appearance of the timber frame allows the pergola to blend into the garden landscape, avoiding the kind of visual intrusion commonly associated with more solid or bulky rear extensions. As a result, the structure does not impose itself on adjoining boundaries and remains subordinate to the host dwelling, fully meeting the SPD's expectation that domestic additions should be non-dominant and respectful of the character of the surrounding residential environment.

The proposal does not create any additional privacy concerns. The pergola introduces no elevated platform, raised deck, or openings that would enable views into neighbouring gardens or windows beyond the level of normal ground-level garden activity, which is already established and accepted within suburban settings. Since the structure remains entirely at garden level with fitted 2.0m tall timber fencing and fence wall, which have already blocked views towards adjoining properties, there is no additional overlooking or loss of privacy arising from its retention. This outcome is consistent with the SPD's acknowledgement that typical garden use seldom constitutes an unacceptable privacy impact.

Noise levels associated with the pergola will remain entirely within the scope of normal domestic garden use. The structure is intended as a sheltered sitting area for the household and does not contain any features that would intensify activity or generate noise above the level normally expected in a residential environment. Its presence therefore, has no bearing on the acoustic amenity of nearby occupiers.

The pergola occupies only a small proportion of the rear garden, and more than half of the existing outdoor amenity area remains open and undeveloped. This ensures that the spacious character of the garden is preserved and that the dwelling continues to benefit from a generous external area, as encouraged by the Borough Design Guide. The scale and positioning of the pergola prevent any perception of overdevelopment within the plot or within the wider estate, where similar lightweight garden structures are already a familiar and acceptable feature.

In summary, the pergola's low height, open design, limited projection and domestic function ensure that the structure does not give rise to overshadowing, loss of privacy, visual dominance, noise disturbance or any other form of harm to neighbouring living conditions. Its characteristics accord with the Wokingham Borough Design Guide SPD and the established planning principles that aim to safeguard residential amenity. The proposal is therefore considered entirely acceptable in neighbour-impact terms.

6. ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

The structure is accessible via the existing rear doors, with no changes required to site access or pedestrian safety.

7. MITIGATING / PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The pergola structure serves an important and specific purpose for the applicant's household. A senior member of the family, residing at the property, has been clinically diagnosed with dementia. Supporting medical evidence from Berkshire Healthcare – The Memory Clinic has been submitted as part of this application to confirm the diagnosis and the ongoing care needs associated with the condition.

Dementia is a progressive cognitive impairment that affects memory, behaviour, spatial awareness and day-to-day functioning. National clinical guidance, including the NHS Dementia Wellbeing Pathway, NICE clinical recommendations and research from the Alzheimer's Society, consistently highlight the following care principles:

(a) The therapeutic importance of safe outdoor access

People living with dementia benefit significantly from regular exposure to outdoor environments. Evidence-based guidance states that access to fresh air, daylight and quiet outdoor activity:

- reduces agitation, anxiety and restlessness
- improves sleep patterns and daily rhythm
- supports mobility and physical health
- stabilises mood and reduces the risk of depression

- improves sensory stimulation and maintains cognitive function
- reduces behavioural distress by providing a “safe escape” from indoor noise and confusion

NICE Guideline NG97 (Dementia: Assessment, Management and Support for People Living With Dementia) emphasises that meaningful outdoor activity is a key component of dementia care, improving both mental wellbeing and physical stability.

(b) The need for supervision and a controlled environment

Due to memory impairment, reduced hazard awareness and the risk of disorientation, dementia patients often require:

- safe, enclosed or semi-enclosed outdoor spaces
- shaded areas to protect them from rain, strong sunlight, or slippery conditions
- locations where family members can maintain visual supervision without restricting independence
- A pergola fulfils these requirements by providing a semi-open, weather-protected, immediately accessible area directly adjacent to the house, allowing the patient to enjoy outdoor activity safely.

(c) Weather protection is essential for older dementia patients

The pergola’s covered design ensures:

- safe outdoor access even in damp, cold or rainy conditions
- stable ground cover underfoot, reducing fall risks
- reassurance for supervising family members
- reduced risk of the patient wandering into open parts of the garden without oversight

Research published by the Alzheimer’s Society indicates that unpredictable weather is one of the main barriers preventing dementia patients from engaging in beneficial outdoor activity. A sheltered structure such as the proposed pergola helps remove this barrier.

(d) Importance of family support and carer involvement

The pergola allows the family to:

- sit outdoors with the patient during calm or agitated periods
- conduct supervised activities such as light exercise, reading, conversation or meals
- provide the patient with emotional stability, routine and familiarity
- reduce environmental triggers that often escalate dementia-related distress

The Alzheimer's Society states that family involvement and safe outdoor routines directly improve quality of life and reduce behavioural symptoms.

e) Planning Relevance of Personal Circumstances

While personal circumstances alone do not create a precedent, they may constitute a material consideration where:

- the development causes no demonstrable planning harm, and
- the personal circumstances are substantial, evidenced and relevant to the use of the land.

In this case:

- The pergola causes no harmful impact on neighbours or local character.
- The structure is of lightweight, domestic scale, compliant with design guidance.
- The need to retain the structure is directly linked to the wellbeing and clinical needs of a vulnerable resident.

Local planning authorities routinely accept clinically supported care needs as part of the overall planning balance where the proposal itself is acceptable on its merits.

Conclusion on Mitigation

The pergola is not simply an optional garden feature; it is a necessary adaptation to ensure the welfare, safety and quality of life of a dementia patient living in the home. It provides essential sheltered access to outdoor space, supporting both physical and psychological wellbeing, and facilitates safe supervision by the family in line with national dementia care guidance.

Given the absence of any material planning harm and the strong clinical justification provided, the personal circumstances of the applicant reasonably and appropriately weigh in favour of granting planning permission.

8. PLANNING JUSTIFICATION

The proposed retention of the single-storey lean-to pergola at 50 Trinder Road is justified not only on the basis of its modest scale and amenity impact, but also in direct accordance with the design objectives set out by the Local Planning Authority. In particular, the following policy support from Wokingham Borough Council applies:

- The Borough Design Guide is an adopted Supplementary Planning Document and is explicitly listed among the "Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents" considered in planning application decisions.

- The Council expects “well-designed developments which complement and build upon the character of that immediate area.”
- The guide replaces the earlier Residential Guide and is the definitive local reference to ensure proposals are “appropriate and protect nearby properties from the impact of the development.”
- The Council’s householder and garden structure application history demonstrates that where proposals are subordinate in scale, respectful of materials and maintain adequate garden amenity, and do not harm neighbouring amenity, they are routinely accepted under the same policy framework.

Specifically in this case:

- The pergola is subordinate in scale relative to the host dwelling (single-storey, shallow 3.6 m depth, low roof height 2.96 m). This aligns with the SPD’s overall design aim for “well-designed developments which complement and build upon the character of the immediate area.”
- The materials (treated timber frame, polycarbonate roof, lightweight translucent blinds) are subtle, recessive and domestic in character — thereby respecting the character of the area rather than imposing a bulky or incongruous structure. This meets the SPD’s requirement that new development should not detract from the prevailing character and should integrate sensitively.
- The structure’s open-sided design and modest height ensure there is no material harm to neighbours through overshadowing, overbearing or loss of privacy.
- The rear garden remains largely open — more than half remains usable — preserving garden amenity and openness. This supports the SPD’s objective that garden and amenity space should be maintained where possible. While the SPD does not strictly prescribe a minimum garden depth for every house type, WBC’s precedent decisions consistently approve garden structures that respect garden openness and do not result in over-intensification.
- The proposal does not add additional habitable floorspace or result in a materially larger built volume: it remains an ancillary open amenity structure. This is consistent with previous approvals of garden-outbuildings under the SPD, where “no harm ... to neighbouring amenity, character or appearance” was identified.

Additionally, the broader development-management context under the Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Document (Local Plan) requires that proposals be consistent with the Borough Design Guide SPD.

Given the above, the pergola meets the key objectives of Wokingham's design policy: it is subordinate, respectful of local character, visually unobtrusive, and protective of neighbouring amenity. On that basis, this application should be considered acceptable and favourable.

9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the pergola represents a modest, well-considered and visually restrained addition to the property, designed in a manner that sits comfortably within the character of the existing dwelling and the wider residential setting. Its lightweight construction, open-sided form and subordinate scale ensure that it does not give rise to any adverse impact on neighbouring amenity, nor does it detract from the appearance or spaciousness of the rear garden environment. The proposal accords with the design aims and guidance set out in the Wokingham Borough Design Guide SPD and reflects the principles of proportionate and sensitive domestic development.

The structure also serves an important functional and well-being purpose for the applicant's household, providing a sheltered and accessible outdoor space that supports the needs of a vulnerable family member. In the absence of any identifiable planning harm, and given the clear justification for its retention, the proposal is considered wholly acceptable in planning terms.

For these reasons, planning permission for the retention of the pergola is respectfully sought.

APPENDICES

1. Design and Access Statement
2. Application Drawings
3. CIL form
4. Supporting information: Site photos, Screen Blind Specifications
5. Supporting information: NHS letter and email