

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

MR D PHILLIPS

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

POUND LANE COTTAGE

POUND LANE

HURST

WOKINGHAM

RG10 0RS

**Change of use of existing outbuilding to
an independent dwelling with associated external alterations.
Change of use of associated land to residential curtilage.**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of a full application for the conversion of an existing outbuilding to an independent dwelling with associated external alterations together with a change of use of adjacent land to residential curtilage.
- 1.2 The application is submitted on behalf of Mr D Phillips and follows the grant of a lawful development certificate for the retention of an existing detached outbuilding used for domestic storage purposes in association with Pound Lane Cottage on 30 March 2026 (LPA ref: 260158).
- 1.3 This statement is divided into the following sections:
- Site and Surroundings
 - Site History
 - Planning Policy Context
 - The Planning Application
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Summary and Conclusions
- 1.4 The statement will demonstrate that the conversion of the building into a residential dwelling is acceptable in principle and would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the area or the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. As the proposal does not include any expansion away from the original buildings, there is no conflict with those parts of Policy CP11 that are not considered to be out of date. It will also demonstrate that the proposal is acceptable in terms of highways and parking, trees and ecology.

- 1.5 Reference will be made in particular to the fact that the Council does not have a five year supply of housing. The most recent published figure contained within the Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement of 31 March 2025 (published 31 July 2025) is that at 31 March 2025, the Council could only demonstrate a 2.5 year housing land supply. As a result, the tilted balance is engaged. When applying the tilted balance, the adverse impacts are not of such magnitude that they would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.

2 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site lies immediately to the south of Pound Lane Cottage, Pound Lane, Hurst within land defined as being 'Countryside' in the Proposals Map. The building is currently lawfully used as domestic storage in association with Pound Lane Cottage as confirmed by the LDC granted on 30 March 2016 under Ref. 260158 (i.e. it is already in residential use).
- 2.2 The site is accessed from Pound Lane via an existing driveway which leads to a graveled parking area to the front of the existing building. The existing building is single storey and is timber clad with a tiled pitch roof. The building is of solid and sound construction and clearly capable of conversion, having been in storage use for many years.
- 2.3 The existing building is set back substantially from Pound Lane and sits immediately to the rear of Pound Lane Cottage. The front boundary of the site is formed by post and rail fencing and gates. The boundary with Pound Farm Cottage is similarly formed by post and rail fencing with a small section of close boarded fencing closer to the road frontage. Paddocks lie to the south and east of the site whilst to the west is Oakley Farm which comprises of residential and commercial uses including office units (LPA ref: F/1999/0149). There are several trees close to the eastern boundary of the site but these are not within close proximity of the building and in any event are unaffected by this proposal.
- 2.4 Whilst the application site and surrounding area is defined as 'countryside' in the Local Plan Proposals Map, the area clearly has a mixed character and appearance, including residential users, commercial premises, fields and paddocks. The site is not considered to be isolated, being adjacent to a number of other dwellings.
- 2.5 The proposal will not require the removal of any hedging or trees and no changes are proposed to the existing access and parking arrangement. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is unconstrained by flooding issues.

2 SITE HISTORY

3.1 Relevant planning history is set out below:

1368/73 – Additions to provide shower room and bedroom and sitting room. Granted 21/09/1973.

1909/73 – Double garage. Granted 23/01/1974.

28983 – Construction of single storey rear extension. Granted 13/10/1987.

29706 – Rear extension to existing detached garage to form garden store. Granted 26/02/1988.

CLP/2005/5719 – Application for a certificate of proposed lawful development for the erection of an outbuilding. Considered to be permitted development on 01/11/2005.

152276 – Application for a certificate of proposed lawful development for the erection of an extension to an existing outbuilding. Considered to be permitted development on 22/09/2015.

153159 – Householder application for a proposed single storey rear link extension and conversion of existing outbuilding to residential accommodation. Granted 08/01/2016.

160300 – Householder application for a proposed single storey rear link extension and conversion of existing outbuilding to residential accommodation. Granted 17/03/2016.

260158 – Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the retention of an existing detached outbuilding used for domestic storage purposes in association with Pound Lane Cottage. Granted 30/03/2026.

3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

i) National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- 3.1 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 states that in achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. Paragraph 10 states that *'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11).*
- 3.2 Paragraph 39 states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 3.3 Chapter 12 is concerned with achieving well designed places. Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments (among other things):
- 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;
 - Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;

- Sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.

ii) The Development Plan

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010)

- 3.4 Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) requires that a number of criteria are met. These include maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment; providing attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly by the car; and contribute towards reaching zero – carbon development as soon as possible.
- 3.5 Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development) requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality. Proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring land uses.
- 3.6 Policy CP11 is concerned with proposals for development on sites located outside of the Development Limit (including Countryside). The policy sets a series of criteria which new developments are required to meet including the following:
- It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings;
 - It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvements;

Wokingham Borough Managing 'Development Delivery Document (2014)

- 3.7 Policy CC01 states that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.8 Policy TB07 – Internal Space Standards. Proposals for new residential units, including change of use or conversions, should ensure that the internal layout and size are suitable to serve the amenity requirements of future occupiers. The Council will assess all development proposals against minimum standards (as set out in the policy).

iii) Wokingham Borough Design Guide

- 3.9 The following guidance is considered to be of relevance:
- 3.10 R16 – New housing must provide easy access to some form of amenity space. Confirms that the size of garden should relate to the house type and to the proposed number of occupants. Confirms that the minimum garden length of 11m is a generally accepted guideline.
- 3.11 R23 – States that alterations and extensions to buildings should be well designed; respond positively to the original building; contribute positively to the local character and relate well to neighbouring properties.
- 3.12 RD10 – States that proposals for conversions should be based on a detailed understanding of the building and its appropriateness for conversion, which will depend on factors such as its heritage significance, where relevant; the proposed use; the structure and construction of the building and its condition.

4 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

- 4.1 The application proposal is for the conversion of an existing outbuilding to an independent two-bedroomed dwelling with associated external alterations and a change of use of adjacent land to residential curtilage. As stated above, the building benefits from an LDC for 'the retention of the existing detached outbuilding used for domestic storage purposes in association with Pound Lane Cottage' (LPA ref. 260158). The building is no longer required for domestic storage and the extent of domestic storage has been substantially reduced over the past few months.
- 4.2 This chapter considers the proposal in relation to the following matters:
- i. The principle of re-use and location of development
 - ii. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
 - iii. The effect of the proposal on the amenity of neighbouring and futures occupiers;
 - iv. Highway and Transport considerations
 - v. Trees and Biodiversity
- i. The principle of re-use
- 4.3 This proposal is for planning permission to change the use of the building from domestic storage in association with Pound Lane Cottage to an independent residential use. The site is located in the countryside, outside of any settlement boundary. However, the building is not in an isolated location having regard to its proximity to existing dwellings and other uses.
- 4.4 Established case law on the interpretation of the term 'isolated' (*Braintree DC v SSCLG, Greyhead Ltd & Granville Developments Ltd [2018] EWCA Civ 610*) confirms that the phrase refers to a dwelling that is physically separate or remote

from a settlement. In this respect, the judgement of this assessment would be a matter of fact and based on a planning judgment.

- 4.5 The judge in the case *Braintree District Council v SSCLG & Ors* [2017] EWHC 2743 (*Admin*) found that the term 'isolated' should be read against the objective meaning contained within the Oxford Concise English Dictionary which stated that it means '*far away from other places, buildings or people; remote*'. The judge also found that '*isolated homes in the countryside*' are not in communities or settlements.
- 4.6 The application site itself is within close proximity to several other residential dwellings and businesses. Given established case law, the distance involved between the site and nearby properties, and the character of the immediate area which includes several dwellings it could not be described as being 'isolated'.
- 4.7 Paragraph 110 of the NPPF states that 'significant' development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable. However, opportunities to maximise transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-taking. Whilst it is acknowledged that future occupants are likely to rely more heavily on use of a private car than would be the case if there were access to public transport, it is clear that Government policy does not necessarily preclude this type of development in this location particularly as it is small in scale and not isolated (i.e. the exceptions set down in paragraph 84 of the NPPF do not apply).
- 4.8 In conclusion, the site is therefore appropriate for residential use in terms of its location and complies with the NPPF in this regard and the up-to-date parts of CS Policy CP11. In accordance with established case law, it is not situated in an isolated location. The use of the building as a small, two bed dwelling would generate a low level of traffic movements and would not result in any adverse impacts in this regard.
- 4.9 The proposal is supported by Policy CP11 of the Wokingham Core Strategy (CS), which seeks to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment. In particular, the proposal relates to the re-use of an existing

building and does not therefore lead to any 'excessive' encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. The residential use would be contained within the existing structure which is of solid and sound construction and appropriate for conversion. There would be no new built form and the site is already in residential use. As a result, the proposal would not compromise the separate identity of settlements and would maintain the quality of the environment which are the main aims of CS Policy CP11. Whilst ancillary accommodation is proposed within the roof space this would be served by roof lights and there would be no material increase in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

- 4.10 It is also relevant to note that the policies that establish the development limits are currently out of date due to the fact that the Council does not have a NPPF compliant housing land supply. The latest published figure is that the Council on 31 March 2025 could only demonstrate a 2.5 year supply of deliverable housing sites. This factor alone reduces the weight that can be applied to the conflict with the Council's locational policies.
- 4.11 The updated Standard Method confirms that the revised annual supply now equates to 1,336 dwellings per annum. In line with footnote 8 to paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are therefore deemed out of date and the 'tilted balance' set out in paragraph 11(d) (ii) of the NPPF is engaged in respect of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This states that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

ii. Character and appearance

- 4.12 As the proposal is for the conversion of an existing building, the form and appearance of the building is largely retained with external changes to the existing

structure limited to the minimal insertion of windows, roof lights and doors which would positively enhance its visual appearance. The proposed conversion is therefore sympathetic to the original building. The proposal complies with the guidance on conversions set out in the Borough Design Guide (RD10) and the proposed external alterations also respond positively to the original building as required by the guidance at R23.

- 4.13 The proposed dwelling would utilise the existing access and hardstanding for parking and turning. No trees or other natural features would be affected by the proposal.
- 4.14 A modest curtilage area is sought in connection with this proposal for residential re-use. The area sought is proportionate to the size of the property and the character of the area.
- 4.15 The proposal would not therefore have any adverse effect on the character and appearance of the site or the surrounding area and, accordingly, would comply with the BDG and Policy CP3 of the CS which requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality.

iii. Amenity

- 4.16 The proposal would not have any adverse effect on the living conditions of occupiers of nearby dwellings. The closest dwelling to the application site is Pound Lane Cottage, a single storey dwelling immediately to the north. However, the separation distance between the application building and Pound Lane Cottage is generous and the residential use of the building would not be harmful to the amenities of the occupiers of Pound Lane Cottage.
- 4.17 The proposed dwelling would offer a high standard of amenity internally in compliance with MDD Policy TB07 and would also be provided with private and secluded garden space. The proposal therefore complies with Core Strategy Policy CP3 and R23 of the Borough Design Guide in respect to amenity.

iv. Highways and parking

- 4.18 The proposed dwelling would utilise the existing access onto Pound Lane. Given the size of the property, the proposed use of the building as an independent dwelling is likely to generate a low number of traffic movements. The existing access offers good visibility in both directions, and the proposal is considered acceptable in respect to all highway matters.
- 4.19 Ample parking space is available on the existing gravel driveway adjacent to the building, in compliance with the Council's parking standards (i.e. 2 spaces for a two bed property). The applicant is willing to accept a planning condition for cycle parking

iv. Trees and biodiversity

- 4.20 The proposal relates to the conversion of an existing building whilst utilising the existing access and parking areas. No trees or other landscape features on or adjacent to the site would therefore be affected.
- 4.21 The application does not raise any issues in relation to the biodiversity of the site as it relates to an existing building and existing hardstanding which is not extended. The proposal is therefore below the threshold for 10% BNG increase.

v. Planning balance and conclusions

- 4.22 Importantly, the Council accepts that it does not currently have a 5-year housing land supply and that the tilted balance is engaged as a result (2.5 years which represents a substantial shortfall). Paragraph 125 (d) of the NPPF confirms that planning decisions should promote and support the development of underutilised land and buildings especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained. The Government acknowledges that small to medium sized sites are especially important as they tend to be built out quickly. These factors weigh heavily in favour of this submission and the acute need for housing in the Borough. This factor also contributes towards the 'wider benefits to

the community' requirements and is sufficient to outweigh the very limited harm caused through constructing housing on land that is defined as 'countryside'.

- 4.23 The proposal would not result in any loss of existing landscape features can be accessed safely meeting all highway and parking standards.
- 4.24 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives. This proposal would secure net gain across each objective:
- 4.25 Economic objective: The change of use of the site to provide for 1no. new dwelling would provide benefits to local businesses in the immediate vicinity. In addition, the development would provide initial short-term employment in the construction industry followed by longer term benefits in terms of additional support for a variety of local business including pubs, restaurants, shops, local trades and private leisure and recreational establishments. None of the land is actively used as agricultural land.
- 4.26 Social objective: The application would make a meaningful contribution to the local housing stock. Noting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, this contribution towards the Borough's identified shortfall in housing land supply should be afforded substantial weight. The occupants of the property would contribute towards the local community, and the proposal would fulfill a positive social role.
- 4.27 Environmental objective: The site would make effective use of land in accordance with paragraph 11 and Chapter 11 of the NPPF. Whilst the site is located on land defined as 'countryside', it is not in an area which contains or affects assets of particular environmental importance and is not protected land.
- 4.28 It is acknowledged that the site does not benefit from access to public transport and that as a result there is some conflict with CS Policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP9 and CP11. However, in accordance with the NPPF, these policies are deemed to be out of date, so attract only minimal weight to this conflict. The harm attributed to this would be modest in scope and scale.

- 4.29 Having regard to the above considerations, the policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance do not provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. There are no significant adverse impacts that would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal' and the proposal would make a meaningful contribution to the supply of housing in the Borough where there is a substantial shortfall.

5 DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

(a) Use and Amount

The proposal is for the conversion of the existing building into a two-bedroom residential dwelling.

(b) Layout

The layout of the proposal reflects the existing situation which comprises of an existing building and hard standing which will be utilised for parking. The dwelling would be provided with a garden to the rear of the building. The property will be accessed from the existing track leading from Pound Lane.

(c) Scale

No extensions are proposed and there would be no change to the scale of the building.

(d) Appearance

The external appearance of the buildings would be largely unchanged, with alterations limited to replacement / modification of fenestration and other openings. thereby maintaining the rural appearance of the building.

(e) Landscaping

No existing trees or other landscaping would be affected by the proposal.

(f) Access

Access to the site and parking area would remain as existing with parking provided on existing areas of hardstanding. Parking meets adopted standards.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The application should be supported for the following reasons:

- i) The proposal seeks the conversion of an existing building that is currently lawfully used as domestic storage in association with Pound Lane Cottage. The application meets those parts of CS Policy CP11 that are still in date. The proposed use would be contained within the existing building which is suitably located and is appropriate for conversion. No extensions are proposed, and the proposal would not lead to any further encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. The proposal would not compromise the separate identity of settlements and would maintain the quality of the environment which are the main aims of Policy CP11.
- ii) The Council remain unable to demonstrate an adequate housing land supply (i.e. 2.5 year supply) and there is a consistent history of under delivery in the Borough. The updated Standard Method now requires an annual supply of 1,336 dwellings in the Borough. There are no significant adverse impacts that would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal'. The proposal would make a meaningful contribution to addressing this shortfall by providing a new dwelling in a sustainable location. It is acknowledged that the site is remote from public transport modes. However, these policies are deemed to be out of date, so attract only minimal weight to this conflict. The harm attributed to this would be modest in scope and scale.
- iii) When assessed against other policies in the NPPF there is not considered to be any conflict. The proposal meets each of the three objectives to sustainable development (i.e. the economic, social and environmental objectives). The additional householder expenditure has the potential to provide benefits to existing businesses in the area.

- iv) The proposed external alterations are limited to new window openings, rooflights and doors and the proposed conversion is therefore sympathetic to the original building's character and appearance. The proposal complies with the guidance on conversions set out in the Borough Design Guide (RD10) and the proposed external alterations also respond positively to the original building as required by the guidance at R23. The proposal would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the site, the existing building or the surrounding area.
- v) Given the scale of the existing building and the generous separation distances involved, the conversion of the building to a residential dwelling would not result in any harm to the living conditions of nearby occupiers. The proposal would meet the Council's internal space standards and provides for suitable garden space in excess of that set out in the Borough Design Guide.
- vi) The proposed dwelling would utilise the existing access onto Pound Lane and ample parking in compliance with the Council's standards is provided on the existing gravel driveway adjacent to the building. The existing access offers good visibility and the proposal is considered acceptable in respect to highway safety and parking.
- vii) The proposal would not have any implications for trees on or adjacent to the site. The proposal does not increase built footprint and would utilise the existing access and parking arrangement. Accordingly, there are no implications arising from the proposal in relation to trees.