

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

MR A MIAH

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**ALYESKA
SANDHURST ROAD
WOKINGHAM
BERKSHIRE
RG4**

Retention of existing carport

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This planning statement is submitted in support of a householder planning application by Mr A Miah for a carport. As the development has already been completed, planning permission is sought retrospectively following discussions with the Council's Enforcement Officer. Whilst the dwelling has the benefit of permitted development rights, it is accepted that planning permission is required for the carport as it is positioned forward of the principal elevation of the dwellinghouse.

1.2 The statement is divided into the following chapters:

- Introduction
- Site and Surrounding Area
- Planning History
- Planning Policy Context
- The Application Proposal
- Design and Access
- Summary and Conclusions

1.3 This statement will examine all relevant planning policies both local and national and will demonstrate that the application development in full compliance with policy guidance.

1.4 The following reports accompany the submission:

- Arboricultural Impact Assessment – Mark Welby

2 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site is located on the south-western side of Sandhurst Road, Finchampstead. It currently comprises of a large detached two storey dwelling set deep within its plot. There is a large area of hard standing to the front of the dwelling and the timber carport, for which permission is now sought, has been erected on part of the site which was already hard surfaced.
- 2.2 The front boundary of the site adjacent to Finchampstead Road comprises of a high brick wall topped with railings in between the piers. There is also a belt of pine and oak trees within the application site adjacent to the Sandhurst Road frontage which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO-1115-2006).
- 2.3 The site is surrounded by residential dwellings of varying architectural style and design. To the south are a row of detached dwellings access from Cypress Close. The rear gardens of these dwellings back onto Sandhurst Road. To the north is an access leading to a residential dwelling known as Conifers. Beyond that access are a number of detached dwellings accessed from Cambrian Way. Other residential development lies on the opposite side of Sandhurst Road. This part of Sandhurst Road is therefore characterised by dwellings that either front or back onto the road, with high boundary walls and fences. Mature trees are situated close to the road, reflecting its designation as a 'Green Route'.
- 2.4 The site is within the settlement area of Finchampstead North which is defined as a 'Modest Development Location' under CS Policy CP9 (Scale and location of development proposals).

3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The most relevant planning history is set out below:

F/2005/5459 – Proposed erection of two detached dwellings with integral garages. Demolition of existing dwelling. Refused 20 September 2005.

F/2005/6570 – Proposed erection of 3 dwellings with garages. Demolition of existing dwelling. Refused 10 February 2006.

F/2006/9010 – Proposed erection of single storey front and rear extensions including double garage plus raising of roof to form additional first floor accommodation with dormers. Approved 14 December 2006.

VAR/2009/0144 – Application for variation of condition 4 of consent F/2006/9010 for the insertion of a velux window in side of dormer window at first floor level on rear elevation. (Retrospective). Approved 3 April 2009.

F/2009/1922 – Proposed insertion of velux window to first floor over garage (retrospective). Approved 25 November 2009.

211672 – Householder application for the proposed erection of a carport with 3no. parking spaces. Refused 30 July 2021 for the following reason:

“Due to the proximity to the road, siting forward of the front elevation of the existing dwelling and height of the scheme, the proposed carport would be an incongruous, overly dominant addition, obstructing views in the street scene. This would be contrary and detrimental to the established street scene and identified green route and therefore the scheme would conflict with policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, CC03 of the MDD Local Plan and advice set out in the Borough Design Guide.”

3.2 A subsequent appeal in relation to application ref. 211672 was dismissed on 22nd December 2021. However, the carport that has been constructed has been located further away from the boundary with Sandhurst Road and its scale and height has been significantly reduced compared to the proposal considered at appeal. This is considered further in Chapter 5 of this statement.

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 Relevant planning policy guidance falls within the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and the Development Plan which comprises of the Wokingham Core Strategy; the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and the 'Made' Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2038.

i) National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

4.2 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development. There are three overarching objectives to sustainable development which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: economic, social and environmental objectives. The environmental objective includes the need to make efficient use of land and to improve biodiversity. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10).

4.3 Paragraphs 131 - 141 are concerned with achieving well-designed and beautiful 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.

4.4 Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- 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;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

- 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 increase densities);
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Create safe and accessible environments which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

ii) **The Development Plan**

a) **Wokingham Core Strategy (2010) (CS)**

4.5 Relevant policies include:

4.6 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.

4.7 Policy CP3 requires the following under paragraph a): Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

- Are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.

- Paragraphs c) and d) requires that proposals have no detriment upon important ecological, heritage, landscape, or geological features or water courses, and that proposals maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species.

b) Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) (MDD)

4.8 Relevant policies include:

4.9 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.

4.10 Policy CC03 is concerned with Green Infrastructure, trees and landscaping. It states that development proposals should protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.

iii) Supplementary Planning Documents

Borough Design Guide SPD

4.11 The purpose of the guide is to provide general design guidance for all development sites and detailed design guidance for certain topics, these being, residential, streets and spaces, car parking and non-residential development issues.

4.12 In terms of Character and context, it is stated that new development should relate well to its surroundings, including topography and orientation of the site; existing natural and landscape features of value; heritage assets and their setting; the local settlement pattern and network of routes and neighbouring properties.

4.13 Section 4 concerns residential development. Under 'Garages and Parking' the SPD advises that garages should not be sited in front gardens but should be to the side

or rear of a dwelling. It also states that garages should not project forward of the building line of a property.

5 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

5.1 The application proposal is for the erection of a carport at the property. As stated, the carport has already been constructed and therefore this application seeks permission retrospectively.

5.2 This chapter of the statement assesses the proposal against relevant national and local planning policies and specifically against the following considerations which are set out below:

- The principle of development
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Impact of the development on trees
- Amenity considerations
- Highway considerations

i) The Principle of Development

5.3 The site is located within Finchampstead North which is identified in the Core Strategy as a 'Modest Development Location' which is suitable for modest levels of development. Within these areas, the principle of extending a residential property or the erection of outbuildings is acceptable subject to meeting relevant Development Plan policies.

ii) Impact on the character and appearance of the area

5.4 The carport that has been constructed is a small, open-sided, timber structure, supported by 8no. timber posts. The structure has a shallow sloping mono-pitch roof with a maximum height of 2.5m. The carport has been erected to the front of the dwelling on an area of existing hard standing and covers an area of 30sqm (i.e. 6m

x 5m). No additional hard standing has been formed in association with the development.

- 5.5 Whilst the Council's non-statutory SPD discourages the erection of garages and structures forward of the building line of the property, in reality there are numerous examples throughout the Borough of development approved locally or at appeal with the principal determinant being the impact on 'character'. In this case the proposal is for a carport which is open-sided on all sides. The host dwelling benefits from a deep frontage and given the siting of the carport and its low height and scale, it does not dominate or detract from the dwelling's setting or detract from the openness and sense of space currently enjoyed to the front of the property.
- 5.6 The existing dwelling is enclosed by a high boundary wall, with railings above. The carport is sited at a slight angle to the front boundary of the site, with a set back of between about 4m and 6m. The carport, with its open sides and at a height of around 2.5m would not be visually prominent in the street scene particularly given the height of the boundary wall and the natural screening that already exists.
- 5.7 The carport has a very different siting, design and scale to the carport which was refused by the Council in July 2021 (application ref. 211672) and subsequently dismissed on appeal (ref. APP/X0360/D/21/3282087) in December 2021. In dismissing that appeal the Inspector commented as follows:

"Although the proposed carport would have an open framed design, the scale, height and solid design of the roof structure significantly adds to the bulk and massing of the proposal. The orientation and siting of the carport, together with the bulk and mass of the roof structure, would detract from the openness and sense of space currently enjoyed to the front of the property. This harm would be exacerbated by the prominence of the proposed carport from localised views to the north and south of the site on the Road. Consequently, the introduction of a carport of this scale and design, close to the Road, would be uncharacteristic of the built form, impacting upon the sense of space that positively contributes to the semi-rural character and appearance of the area."

5.8 The siting of the current carport has been amended and is considerably less prominent. The carport that was dismissed on appeal was set back a uniform distance from the front boundary of around 4m whilst the current carport achieves a set back of between 4 and 6 metres. It is also set further away from the site access which further reduces its dominance when viewed from Sandhurst Road.

5.9 The design of the carport has also been significantly altered, with its overall height, size, scale and mass substantially reduced. For instance, the proposed carport that was dismissed on appeal measured 9m wide (to accommodate 3no. vehicles) with a depth of 6m and an overall footprint beneath the canopy of 54sqm. It was also shown to have a prominent pitched roof, with a ridge height of 3.76m, substantially in excess of the existing structure. The lesser scale and height of the carport that has been constructed, together with its re-siting, ensures that it does not have a significant visual impact in the same manner as the dismissed structure and as a result it would not result in any material harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal therefore complies with policies CP1 and CP3 of the CS.

iii) Impact on trees

5.10 The application is accompanied by an AIA produced by a qualified arboricultural consultant (Mark Welby). It is pertinent to note that the carport was constructed on an existing area of hard surfacing.

5.11 The conclusion of the AIA is as follows:

- It is likely that the posts were installed in hand-excavated holes, either with standard fence post mix or on met-post style spikes;
- It would be reasonable to assume that any excavation was limited to 250-300mm square holes equating to a total of 0.63m²;
- The subject trees all appear in good health and condition and thus are able to tolerate some minor root disturbance. Given their full canopies and apparent good health, I can see no reason to presume that the installation of the posts has resulted in any long-term detriment.

5.12 This conclusion is consistent with that reached in respect of the previous proposal for a carport which, overall, was closer to the protected trees. In this regard the Inspector commented that:

"The Council also cite Policy CC03 of the Wokingham Borough Council Managing Development Delivery Plan 2014. This policy seeks to protect Green Routes, which the appeal site lies just outside of. Whilst the trees on the site make a contribution to the Green Route, although they are also not within it, the proposal would not adversely affect them. Consequently, I do not find that the proposal would conflict with Policy CC03."

5.13 It can therefore be similarly concluded that the proposal therefore meets MDDLP Policy CC03 as the proposal will protect and retain existing trees, hedges and landscape features.

iv) Amenity Considerations

5.14 The carport is sited well away from the external boundaries of the site and has not resulted in any adverse effect on the living conditions of any of the neighbouring occupiers. The proposal therefore complies with Policy CP3 of the CS in this regard.

v) Highway Considerations

5.15 No changes are proposed to the existing access arrangement to the site. The carport does not impede visibility at the junction and has no impact on highway safety. The carport provides covered parking for 2no. vehicles on an existing area of hard surfacing and accordingly has not altered the existing parking provision on the site.

5.16 Given the fact that the development can be accommodated without raising any transportation or highway issues, the proposal is compliant with CS Policy CP6.

6 DESIGN AND ACCESS

- 6.1 Use and Amount: The carport is used in association with the existing residential dwelling. It provides covered parking for 2no. vehicles.
- 6.2 Layout: The carport covers an existing area of hard standing to the front of the dwelling. Its siting has been dictated by the position of the vehicular access into the site, the positioning of the dwelling and the need to ensure that the trees along the road frontage are not adversely affected. The existing tree belt along Sandhurst Road will be retained in full which will effectively filter and screen views from the public domain.
- 6.3 Scale: The carport is an open sided structure, with a shallow sloping mono pitch roof with a maximum height of about 2.5m. It is small in scale, measuring 6m x 5m overall.
- 6.4 Appearance: The carport is a simple, timber structure, supported on 8no. posts.
- 6.5 Landscaping: The proposal retains the important tree belt along the road frontage which further helps to screen the development.
- 6.6 Access: No changes to the existing access arrangement are proposed. The carport provides for 2no. covered parking spaces although the overall provision of parking remains unaltered as the carport covers an existing area of hard standing.

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The application should be supported for the following reasons:

- i) The site is located within Finchampstead North which is identified in the Core Strategy as a 'Modest Development Location'. Within these areas, the principle of extending a residential property or the erection of outbuildings is acceptable subject to meeting relevant Development Plan policies.
- ii) The carport is of timber construction and is low in height with an open-sided design. It does not dominate or detract from the dwelling's setting or detract from the openness and sense of space currently enjoyed to the front of the dwelling. The site is enclosed by a high boundary wall and the set back of the carport from the front boundary together with its open sided design and low height ensures that it is not visually prominent in the street scene particularly given the tree screening that already exists. The carport has not therefore adversely affected the character and appearance of the site or the surrounding area.
- iii) The application is accompanied by an AIA which concludes that trees are unlikely to be affected by the construction of the carport. The proposal therefore meets MDDLP Policy CC03 as it will protect and retain existing trees, hedges and landscape features.
- iv) The development has not resulted in harm to the living conditions of occupiers of the closest properties who are all distant from the application site. The proposals meet CS Policy CP3 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF which require a high standard of amenity to be provided.
- v) No change is proposed to the access to the site or to the overall level of parking provision on the site. The carport provides covered parking for 2no. vehicles on existing hard standing.