

Wokingham Borough Council
Planning Department
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN

Date: 9 October 2025

Our ref: 64144/01/DL/CA/34043467v10

Dear Sir/Madam

26 Wargrave Road, Twyford, Wokingham, RG10 9PQ: Full planning application for erection of one family dwelling

On behalf of our client, Mr & Mrs Cooper, we are pleased to submit a full planning relating to the proposed erection of 1no. self build, single storey dwelling at land at 26 Wargrave Road, Twyford, Wokingham, RG10 9PQ (hereafter known as “the current proposals”).

The proposed description of development is as follows:

“Erection of 1no. dwelling and creation of access, retention of existing fence, and associated works.”

Application Submission

This application has been submitted via the Planning Portal and comprises the following:

- 1 This covering letter;
- 2 Completed application form;
- 3 Surface Water Drainage Strategy (prepared by Flood and Civil):
 - i Infiltration Test Rate Calculation
 - ii Water Quality Assessment
 - iii Infodrainage Hydraulic Calculation
 - iv SuDS Maintenance Schedule
- 4 Arboricultural Impact Assessment (prepared by Tree Surveys);
- 5 Tree Survey (prepared by Tree Surveys);
- 6 Planning application plans (prepared by Adonia Architectural LTD):
 - i Location and Block Site (PCH21 PL102A)

- ii Proposed Plan and Elevations (PCH21 PL-202A)
- iii Proposed Site Relative Heights (PCH21 203A)
- iv Block Plan with Distances (PCH21 PL103)

The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (ref. PP-14239222) and the requisite planning application fee of £588 plus the £85 service charge has been paid.

The Site

The proposal relates to a site comprising part of the residential garden of 26 Wargrave Road which sits to the east of the existing house. The site is on the northern side of Hermitage Drive, surrounded by residential properties and Lincoln Gardens to the north. The site is a rectangular shape and is set back from Hermitage Drive by approximately 20 metres. There are a number of mature trees outside of the site boundary to the east, and some younger trees to the south of the site.

The wider surrounding area is broadly characterised by detached and semi-detached residential properties with services including a primary school, shops and public transport nearby. The site is situated in the village of Twyford, approximately 5 miles north-east of Reading town centre.

The site is within the settlement boundary of Twyford. The site is in Flood Zone 1, and therefore an area at least risk of flooding. The site is not in a conservation area and there are no listed buildings on, or near the site.

Planning History

In December 2016, a full planning application for the erection of 2no. dwellings was refused (ref. no. 162886, hereafter known as “the refused application”). There were four reasons for refusal of this application, summarised as follows:

- 1 Inappropriate layout and incongruous design with the street scene.
- 2 Overdevelopment of the site.
- 3 Inadequate provision of quality amenity area.
- 4 Harm to the privacy of surrounding properties through overlooking.

There have been no further applications for planning permission at the site since the refused application.

Pre-Application Advice

Following the refused application, the applicant revised the proposals and sought pre-application advice at the site in respect of erection of a single-storey dwelling. The revised proposal sought to address the reasons for refusal attached to the refused application.

The pre application response from WBC confirmed that the principle of development was acceptable and that the Council was unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. The Council raised a number of other detailed matters which are addressed within this submission.

Proposed Development

The proposed development is the erection of 1no. single storey dwelling at the site, intended for self build occupation by the applicants. The proposed bungalow provides two double bedrooms and one single bedroom. The proposal includes vehicular access from Hermitage Drive, two car parking spaces, an outdoor amenity space and landscaping.

The applicant has responded to the reasons for refusal attached to the refused application through the following key design changes:

- Reducing the number of proposed dwellings from two to one.
- Reducing the height of the proposed dwelling from two to one storey.
- Inclusion of windows on the street facing elevations to activate them.
- Inclusion of planting along the site boundaries.
- Provision of amenity space which is in line with Borough requirements.
- Revised siting of the dwelling, away from the mature trees to the east and ensuring no tree loss or adverse impact.
- Submission of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment to demonstrate no significant impact to trees.

Planning Policy

In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

WBC Local Plan

The adopted Statutory Development Plan for WBC relevant to the site and proposals comprises the following documents:

- The Core Strategy (CS) (adopted 2010);
- Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan (adopted 2014);
- Twyford Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) (adopted July 2023).

Emerging Local Plan

WBC is currently undertaking a Local Plan Update. The Proposed Submission Plan (2023-2040) is currently at Regulation 19 stage and was submitted for examination on 28th February 2025. Weight is given to the policies of the emerging Local Plan according to the provisions of paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was most recently updated on 12th December 2024 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The NPPF is based on a fundamental presumption in favour of sustainable development and states that *"For decision-taking this means: c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay"* (Para 11c). The Council acknowledge that they have a deficiency in housing supply and therefore certain development plan policies are out of date. As such the weight to be attached to any conflicts between proposals and development plan policies should be set against the extent of housing shortfall, longevity of unmet housing needs in the Borough, and the fact the adopted Local Plan does not meet current levels of housing need.

Where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, the NPPF requires permission to be granted unless *"the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance **provides a strong reason** for refusing the development proposed"* (Lichfields emphasis).

Alongside the NPPF there are a range of National Planning Practice Guidance (PPGs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that comprise material considerations in planning decisions. WBC's Borough Design Guide SPD (2012) is considered of relevance to this application.

Assessment of Proposal

Principle of Development

Policy CP9 of the CS note that within major development locations (including Twyford), development will be considered acceptable in principle subject to it complying with other principles in the Local Plan. The principle of a new dwelling in this major development location is therefore acceptable, and this was confirmed in the pre-application response from WBC.

Paragraph 11d of the NPPF states that *"where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date granting permission unless*

i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed

ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

The application of policies on the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance (as per NPPF footnote 7) do not provide a strong reason for refusing permission in this instance. WBC's most recent 5YHLS position was published in January 2025¹. The statement contends the Borough can demonstrate a housing land supply of 1.7 years, and the policies which are most important for determining the application are considered to be out of date. The tilted balance at Paragraph 11d of the

¹ https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2025-01/Five%20Year%20Housing%20Land%20Supply%20Statement%202024_o.pdf

NPPF is therefore engaged, and requires planning permission for the proposed dwelling to be granted unless *“any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this 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”*.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states the following:

“In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:

- a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and*
- b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement (see paragraphs 69-70).”*

The Twyford Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in July 2023 and the Plan does not include any policies or allocations to meet its identified housing requirement. As such the provisions of Paragraph 14 are not engaged within this instance.

Design and Scale

Policy TBo6 of the MDD relates to considerations for allowing new dwellings in residential gardens. This policy builds on policy CP3 of the CS which states, inter alia, that development must be appropriate in terms of its *‘activity, mass, layout, built form, heights, material and character’* for the surrounding area, and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the adjoining land users and occupiers. Policy TW13 of the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan requires development to demonstrate how it has responded to *‘design considerations relevant to the character area’*, and *‘general design principles set out in the Twyford Design Guidelines’*.

Hermitage Drive is characterised by detached and semi-detached dwellings including those of two storey design, chalet bungalow style, and single storey dwellings. There is no single architectural form evident in the immediate vicinity of the site, and there are various roof pitches and styles found on Hermitage Drive.

The proposed dwelling is a single-storey, detached dwelling of a chalet bungalow style. The proposed overall height of the dwelling is six metres. The design of the proposed dwelling seeks to create active north and south elevations which respond to Lincoln Gardens and Hermitage Drive respectively, via inclusion of multiple windows on the elevations and roof slopes, and planting at the north elevation. The proposed dwelling incorporates pitched gables, with an overall hipped roof.

The chalet bungalow style and modest height of the proposal reflects the character of surrounding properties, as shown in the submitted Proposed Site Relative Heights plan. The proposal therefore responds positively to the character of the surrounding area, and to the existing built form along Hermitage Drive and Lincoln Gardens, in accordance with policies TBo6 and CP3 of the MDD and CS.

Layout

Policy TBo6 of the MDD notes that development of residential gardens should (inter alia) be of a *'layout that integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas'*.

Policy CP3 of the CS requires development to be (inter alia) of a layout that is appropriate to the character of the surrounding area.

Properties alongside Hermitage Drive and Lincoln Gardens are generally oriented to front the road, with notable exceptions including 26 Wargrave Road and 24a Lincoln Gardens which are both set back from the road. Additionally, nos. 7 and 11 Hermitage Drive are set back further from the road than no. 3 Hermitage Drive. Along Lincoln Gardens, dwelling frontages are staggered at different distances from the road, hence the area is not characterised by a uniform building line.

The proposal is designed to address both Lincoln Gardens and Hermitage Drive, and features a set back which is reflective of those evident at other dwellings in the immediate context.

Given the modest height of the proposed dwelling, it will not appear prominent in the street scene of either Hermitage Drive or Lincoln Gardens. Where the dwelling is visible from either of the adjoining roads, elevations are articulated by architectural detailing and planting. Much of the existing 'gap' between nos. 3 and 7 Hermitage Drive is retained as the driveway and residential garden to serve the proposal, respecting the rhythm of plot frontages.

With regard to the proposed amenity space (garden), we note variation in the location of private gardens in relation to dwellings, in the surrounding area. No. 3 Hermitage Drive and no. 24 Lincoln Gardens are in immediate proximity of the site and are served by gardens to the side of the dwelling. The proposed garden to the front of the property is proportionate to the size of the dwelling, conveniently located with access from the entrance to the property, the main bedroom, and the driveway, and will integrate with the surrounding area.

The proposal incorporates landscaping which will complement the house and help assist the new dwelling integrate into the street scene. Planting is proposed along the northern boundary of the site to help the dwelling assimilate into Lincoln Gardens.

Overall, by virtue of the layout of the proposed dwelling including the active elevations and proposed planting and landscaping the site is considered to integrates with the pattern of development in the surrounding area. It is therefore considered the development is in accordance with policies TBo6 and CP3 of the Local Plan.

The proposals include retention of an existing fence on the northern boundary of the site. The proposals also include soft landscaping in front of the fence, to soften its appearance.

Residential Amenity

CS Policy CP3 sets out that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that inter alia *"are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height... with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users"*.

Policy TBo6 of the MDD requires, inter alia, development of private residential gardens to *‘provide a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking’*.

Policy TBo7 of the MDD deals with Internal Space Standards and confirms that a three bedroom, five bedspace house should provide 87 square metres of internal space in total, with a range of individual room sizes. The Wokingham Borough Design Guide advises that gardens should have a minimum depth of 11m, should be roughly rectangular in shape and should be able to accommodate typical garden activities.

The proposed development provides 90sqm of internal space, and exceeds the required room sizes, thus exceeding the requirements of policy TBo7. The habitable rooms are all served by at least one window providing adequate levels of natural light and affording satisfactory amenity to future occupiers. There is also a range of room sizes, with two double bedrooms and one single bedroom, providing suitable family accommodation.

The proposed development provides circa 101 square metres of amenity space in the form of a private garden to the east of the dwelling, with approximate dimensions of 12m by 8.4m not inclusive of the driveway. The garden is rectangular in shape. The proposals incorporate sufficient, adequate and appealing garden space which is larger than that of the refused application, and therefore address reason for refusal 3 of the refused application.

The proposals accord with policies CP3 of the Core Strategy and TBo7 of the MDD Local Plan, and provide sufficient internal space. The pre-application response confirms this, noting that *‘future occupiers should enjoy a good standard of living accommodation in terms of the amount of living space’* (page 10). Through provision of sizeable private amenity space, the proposal is also compliant with policy TBo6 of the MDD and the Borough Design Guide.

Neighbouring Amenity

North

North of the site is Lincoln Gardens, with no. 61 being the closest property on Lincoln Gardens to the site. Considering the modest height of the proposed dwelling it should not impact significantly on the light received by no. 61 and not have an unduly overbearing impact.

South

South-east of the site is 3 Hermitage Drive. The modest height of the proposed dwelling, alongside the careful placement of windows, will avoid loss of privacy by way of overlooking and will prevent the proposal from appearing unduly prominent from no. 3’s amenity space. There is a separation distance of 7.7m between the rear of the proposal and no. 3’s rear which is set at an angle, with no windows overlooking. Given this distance and the staggered relationships between dwellings, the proposals will have an acceptable impact on the amenity of no. 3.

East

East of the site are properties along Hermitage Drive including nos. 5, 8, 9 and 11. By virtue of the proposals' modest height, the vegetation screening present between the site and these properties, and the substantial separation distance between the proposal's front elevation and rear gardens of these properties (at least 20m), the proposal would not cause an unacceptable loss of privacy to the rear gardens of these properties.

West

The site is the residential garden of 26 Wargrave Road; the property sits to the east of the site.

Wokingham's Borough Design Guide states that dwellings should have a minimum distance of 12m when measuring back to flank of dwellings. There is a 13.5m back to flank distance between the proposal and no. 26 Wargrave Road as shown on the block plan, which exceeds this requirement from the Borough Design Guide.

The modest height of the proposal ensures that occupiers of no. 26 will continue to enjoy their amenity space without undue impact through overbearing, overshadowing, or loss of privacy.

The proposals have been specifically designed to respond to the feedback provided by the Council in the refused application and subsequent pre application about impact on neighbouring residents. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with policy CP3 of the Local Plan and Wokingham and Twyford Design Guides.

Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecology

With regard to the Environment Act 2021 and Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act, there is now a statutory duty for most new developments to deliver 10% BNG. The regulations outline some exemptions to this including the 'Self build and custom build' exemption. A proposal must meet the following conditions to qualify for this exemption:

- Consist of no more than 9 dwellings.
- Be on a site that has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares.
- Consist exclusively of dwellings that are self build or custom housebuilding as defined in Section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.

The proposed development is a single dwelling with a site area of 354sqm (0.04ha). The proposal also meets the definition of 'self build' insofar that it will be a dwelling built and completed by an individual (the applicant). The proposal is therefore exempt from the statutory requirement to deliver 10% on-site BNG.

Policy CP7 seeks to protect features of ecological importance and MDD Policy TB23 requires biodiversity features to be incorporated into new developments. As mentioned, the proposal incorporates planting along the northern boundary of the site, seeking to incorporate ecological features into development.

The proposal is considered to comply with CS policy CP7 and MDD policy TB23 by virtue of the planting proposed at the site.

Trees

Policies CCo3 of the MDD requires proposals to demonstrate how they have considered the protection and retention of existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.

A Tree Survey is submitted with the application. The Survey concludes that following an inspection of 10 trees, four are in category B (moderate quality), five are in category C (low quality), and one is in category U (unsuitable for retention). The Survey also concludes that retained trees should be protected by suitable protection barriers and ground protection, a scheme for which is indicated at Appendix 5 and 6 of the submitted Tree Survey.

The application is also supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment which concludes that no trees require removal to facilitate the proposed development. Additionally the AIA concludes that the proposed layout of the site will not require any pruning works to the retained trees to facilitate works on the site. The AIA proposes standard construction methods and ground protection to mitigate any impacts to root protection areas. Subject to adherence with these recommendations, the AIA states that there will be no significant impacts on the retained trees as a result of the proposed development. Appendix 1 of the AIA indicates the proposed mitigation methods.

The Tree Survey contains a Shade Constraints Plan which indicates there will be very minimal shade coverage in the private garden, mitigating against pressure to fell or prune these trees. The trees will not present obstruction of light.

The submitted Tree Survey and AIA demonstrate there will be no removal of trees required to facilitate the works, and there will be no major impact to tree root protection areas. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of trees, in line with policy CCo3 of the MDD.

Drainage

Policy CP1 of the CS requires development to provide adequate drainage. Policy CC10 of the MDD requires proposals to incorporate SuDS and be submitted with a surface water drainage strategy.

The application is accompanied by a Surface Water Drainage Strategy. SuDS are proposed at the site commensurate to the scale of development, for example bioretention systems including SuDS planters, and soakaways. The submission provides detail on the maintenance strategies for these. The proposed drainage at the site is in accordance with policies CP1 and CC10 of the Local Plan, demonstrated via the SWDS.

Transport

CS Policy CP6 and MDD Policy CCo7 require appropriate parking and access arrangements to be provided for residential schemes. Policy TBo6 of the MDD requires development of residential gardens to include access to an appropriate highways standard. Policy TW1 of the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan encourages sustainable modes of transport.

Access is proposed to the site from the south via Hermitage Drive. The proposed access will not result in the loss of any formally allocated car parking on the public highway. Two car parking spaces are proposed on the driveway to the east of the property; these meet the minimum required dimensions for

car parking spaces (5m x 2.5m), and meets WBC's car parking standards for the proposed scale of the dwelling.

The proposed access and car parking is in line with Local Plan policy and local standards. The pre-application response confirms that WBC Highways has no objections in principle to the use of this area of Hermitage Drive for access to the site.

CIL

The proposal will be a self-built dwelling, for private use by the application; the applicant is on the self-build register. In accordance with WBC's CIL Guidance Notes for Applicants, the development is expected to be exempt from payment of CIL, subject to completion of necessary forms.

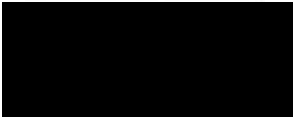
The applicant is willing to enter into discussions with the Council on securing the self build status of the dwelling, either through the planning permission or legal agreement.

Conclusion

This covering letter together with the plans and supporting documents that the proposed development is in accordance with the Development Plan. In this case Development Plan policies are out of date, and in accordance with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF the tilted balance is engaged. This cover letter and the accompanying documents demonstrate that any adverse impacts associated with the development would not significantly and demonstrable outweigh the benefits and therefore planning permission should be granted.

We trust you have sufficient information to positively progress the application. Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact myself or my colleague Nick Kirby.

Yours faithfully


Caitlin Attrill

Planner

BA (Hons) MSc