

TITLE: **Planning Support Statement**
CLIENT: Mr and Mrs Bailes
LOCATION: Chilterns, Thames Drive, Charvil, Wokingham RG10 9TP
ISSUED: October 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Support Statement (PSS) has been prepared on behalf of the applicant, Mr and Mrs Bailes in respect of 'the site', which comprises the dwelling Chilterns and its curtilage. The site is located on Thames Drive, Charvil, Wokingham.
- 1.2. This application proposes the replacement of a bungalow of no architectural or historic merit with a self-built, two-storey dwelling, an annexe to accommodate a study a two-bay carport and a comprehensive landscaping scheme. The scheme will be implemented following the demolition of the existing dwelling, garage and gatehouse structure.
- 1.3. The purpose of the application is to replace the existing outdated and unattractive buildings with a contemporary dwelling featuring a context-led design that benefits from a fabric-first sustainable approach. This approach includes solar panels, air-source heat pumps, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, rainwater harvesting, and a green roof. It is also designed to be flood resistant and to provide additional flood storage to ensure there is no increase in the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 1.4. This application follows a previous application for a replacement dwelling. This was withdrawn. The current application addresses all the issues raised by officers at that stage.
- 1.5. This Planning Support Statement is authored by Caron Greene, Principal Planner for Axiom Planning and reviewed by Daniel Gender-Sherry, Director. Caron is a Chartered Town Planner with both Local Authority and private practice experience. She holds a BSc degree in geography and a Masters Degree in Civic Design (Town and Regional Planning).
- 1.6. The main purposes of this planning statement are to:
 - Describe the site and surrounding area;
 - Set out the planning history and explain the way in which the current application has overcome previous issues raised in relation to a replacement dwelling on the site;
 - Set out the full planning policy context in relation to the proposed development;
 - Detail, in policy terms, the extent to which the development accords with the requirements of Development Plan Policy and any identified material considerations.
- 1.7. This Planning Statement concludes that the current proposal accords with the development plan and there are no material considerations indicating that it should not be approved. In

doing so, it demonstrates that the issues raised by officers regarding the previous replacement dwelling on the site have been resolved.

Documents included within this Planning Application

- Covering Letter
- This Planning Statement
- Existing Site Location Plan 333 PL 001
- Existing Site Plan 333 PL 010
- Existing Ground Floor Plan 333 PL 040
- Existing First Floor Plan 333 PL 041
- Existing Roof Floor Plan 333 PL 042
- Existing Front Elevation 333 PL 060
- Existing Side Elevation 333 PL 061
- Existing Rear Elevation 333 PL 062
- Existing Rear Elevation 333 PL 063
- Proposed Site Plan 333 PL 110
- Proposed Site Section A-A 333 PL 115
- Proposed Foundation Plan 333 PL 119
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan 333 PL 120
- Proposed First Floor Plan 333 PL 121
- Proposed Roof Plan 333 PL 123
- Proposed Foundation Plan A 333 PL 138
- Proposed Foundation Plan B 333 PL 139
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan A 333 PL 140
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan B 333 PL 141

- Proposed First Floor Plan A 333 PL 142
- Proposed First Floor Plan B 333 PL 143
- Proposed Roof Plan A 333 PL 144
- Proposed Roof Plan B 333 PL 145
- Proposed Side Elevations 333 PL 150
- Proposed Front Elevation 1-1 333 PL 160
- Proposed Side Elevation 2-2 333 PL 161
- Proposed Rear Elevation 3-3 333 PL 162
- Proposed Side Elevation 4-4 333 PL 163
- Proposed Side Elevation 5-5 Car Port 333 PL 164
- Proposed Side Elevation 6-6 Car Port 333 PL 165
- Proposed Courtyard Elevations 7-7&8-8 333 PL 166
- Proposed Section B-B 333 PL 170
- Proposed Section C-C 333 PL 180
- Built Footprint Diagram 333 PL 700
- Design and Access Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment September 2025 by Waterco
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement by ROAVR GROUP - 25_5837_01_24
- Planting Schedule 08.10.25 by Fisher, Tomlin and Bowyer
- Outline Landscape Plan Rev F
- Landscape Materials Plan 13983.1Rev E
- Planting Plan 1395.1Rev G
- Chilterns Bat Mitigation Strategy. Issue 2 by Ecology Partnership

- Chilterns Phase 1 and Phase 2 Bat Assessment 2022
- Chilterns Phase 1 and Phase 2 Bat Assessment 2025

2. Site Description

- 2.1. The site, as shown in Figure 1, has an area of 0.41 hectares and comprises the existing dwelling, Chilterns, and its curtilage. Adjoining the site to the northwest is the River Thames and to the north east and east is agricultural land. To its immediate south is a bungalow known as Island Cottage.
- 2.2. Chilterns is the northernmost of a row of large dwellings set in generous rectangular grounds which run down to the River Thames. A number of these are replacement dwellings. In this row, only Chilterns, St Patricks Lodge and the neighbouring Island Cottage have not been replaced.
- 2.3. The land within the curtilage of Chilterns is well used garden land. It comprises a mowed lawn, several trees and shrubs, and a drive and parking area of “crazy paving”. The curtilage

Figure 1: The site in its immediate context



contains several outbuildings. These are a garage and store, a gatehouse structure, a greenhouse and a river pavilion.

- 2.4. As can be seen in Figure 2, the dwelling and outbuildings at Chilterns, currently crowd and lie immediately adjacent to those at the neighbouring dwelling, Island Cottage, rather than being centred within the plot.
- 2.5. The site can be seen in its broader context in Figure 3. It is located to the south west of Wargrave, the north west of Twyford, the north west of Charvil and the north east of Sonning

Eye. The Thames forms an effective barrier to settlements to the north, which can only be reached via the Sonning Bridge or the bridge at Henley-on-Thames. The development plan designates this area as countryside.



3. Planning History

3.1. Inspection of the Wokingham Borough Council online planning database has revealed the following relevant planning history.

Application Number	Description	Decision
232977	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. two storey dwelling with annexe and attached two bay carport following demolition of existing dwelling and garage.	Withdrawn 29/10/2024

3.2. Issues raised prior to the withdrawal of the application are as follows:

1. The Environment Agency submitted three objections to the scheme. Amendments to the Flood Risk Assessment were made in response to the first two objections. The third objection was made because the proposed dwelling footprint was larger than the existing 24.16sq.m. and the appropriate compensation for higher order flood events beyond 34.7AOD was not demonstrated: the Environment Agency stated that level-for-level compensation must be provided from ground level to 35.34mAOD;
2. The Ecology Officer requested a soft landscaping scheme and a hard landscaping scheme, which has been secured, thus maintaining or enhancing the site's ability to support fauna and flora and protected species. Other points could be addressed by condition.
3. Occupants of the neighbouring dwelling, Island Cottage, and an architect friend objected to the proposal on the grounds of overlooking, visual intrusion, and the possible noise transmission caused by the use of the terrace.
4. Objectors also raised issues about the calculation of the footprint of the existing and proposed dwelling.
5. Scale and massing for the proposal were discussed by the case officer and the architects of the scheme. Following a position amendment within the site and the provision of 3-D drawings, the case officer considered the design to be acceptable.

3.3. This Planning Statement demonstrates how the issues raised by the previous application have now been overcome by the current proposal.

3.4. The following table lists planning applications for replacement dwellings on sites along Thames Drive that have been approved. The location of the replacement dwellings is shown in Figure 4.

Application Number	Description	Decision
42114	Proposed erection of one replacement dwelling. Demolition of existing dwelling. Herons Creek , Thames Drive.	Approved 11/05/2004
71946	Proposed erection of new dwelling, plus demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings (amendment to F/20071952) Windrush , Thames Drive	Approved 14/11/2007
61908	Proposed erection of a replacement dwelling and garage. Amendments to consent F/2006/5941 The Cottage , Thames Drive	Approved 01/08/2006
72519	Proposed erection of new dwelling and garage. Demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings. Windrush , Thames Drive	Approved 07/09/2007
50068	Proposed erection of a replacement dwelling and carport. Demolition of existing dwelling. The Cottage Thames Drive	Approved 16/03/2006
40647	Proposed erection of one replacement dwelling and detached garage. Demolition of existing dwelling. Island Reach , Thames Drive	Approved 12/03/2004
160160	Full applications for the proposed erection of a replacement dwelling with integrated garage, following demolition of existing bungalow, store and detached garage. Thatchers Mead , Thames Drive.	Approved 15/04/2016

3.5. The above history demonstrates that planning permission has been granted for replacement dwellings on all the residential properties on Thames Drive to the south of Chilterns with the exception of Island Cottage and St Patricks Lodge. The most recent approval was at Thatchers Mead in 2016.

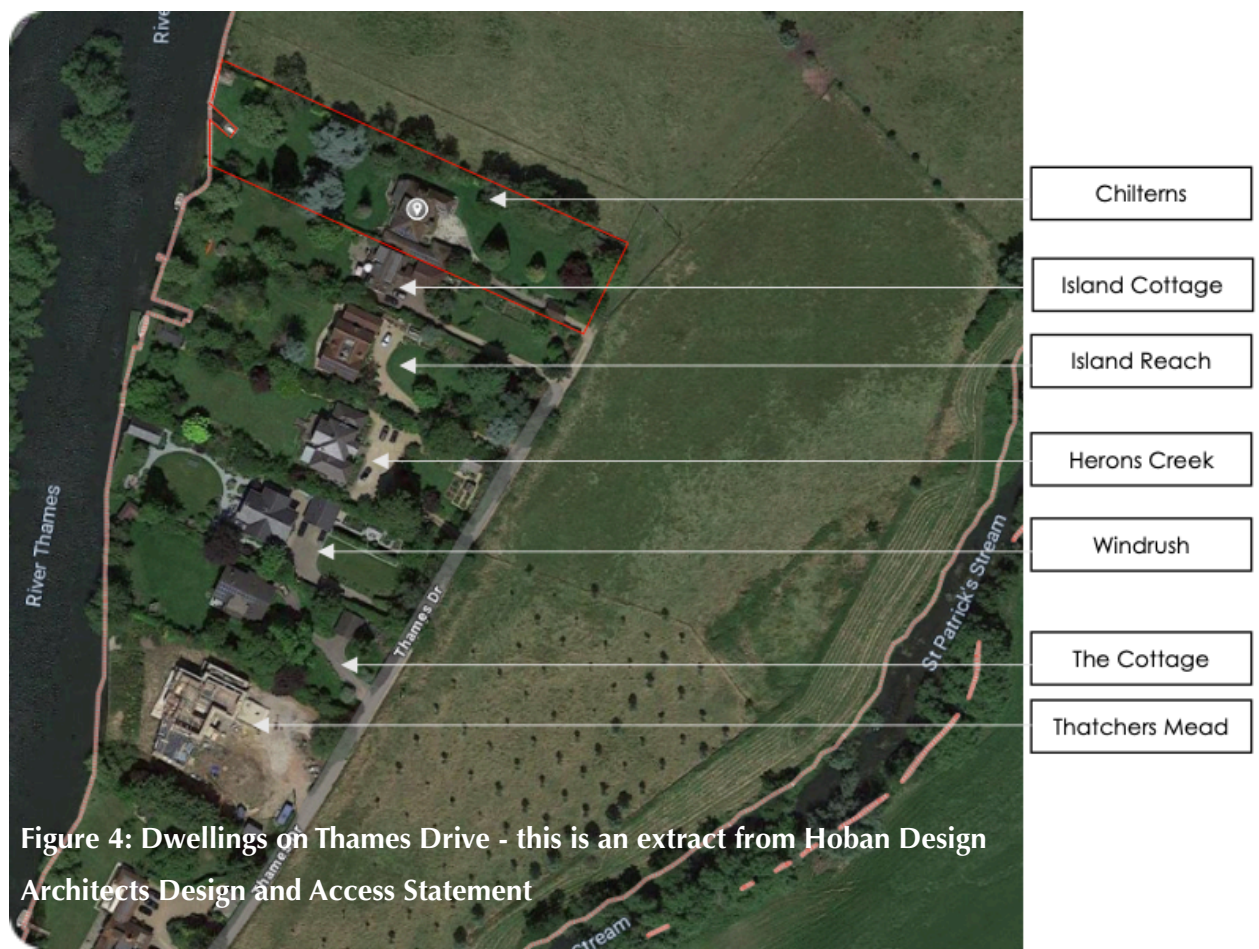


Figure 4: Dwellings on Thames Drive - this is an extract from Hoban Design Architects Design and Access Statement

4. The Proposal

- 4.1. The applicants wish to build a self-built, two-storey dwelling with an annexe to accommodate a study, a store (to be used for garden equipment and cycles) and an attached two-bay carport. This would be built following the demolition of the existing dwelling, the garage/store and the gatehouse structure. An extensive landscaping scheme is also proposed.
- 4.2. The proposed dwelling will include a living room, kitchen/dining room, family room, and five bedrooms, three with ensuite bathrooms. It will also benefit from a pantry, a plant room, a boot room, a utility room and a dry and wet change area to facilitate water sports on the river.
- 4.3. There will be two parking spaces in the carport, and one in the drive.
- 4.4. The dwelling has been designed to:
- Sit below the canopy height of trees that line the eastern site boundary;
 - Sit further away from the neighbouring property to the west of the site in comparison with the existing garage and store: its central location within the site will reflect the pattern of development on Thames Drive;
 - Exemplify a fabric-first approach and incorporate multiple measures to decrease carbon emissions and increase the sustainability of the design. These are listed in full in the submitted Design and Access Statement.
- 4.5. The dwelling has also been designed to be flood resilient through work with the specialist consultant, Waterco and will result in a net gain in flood plain capacity whilst ensuring no negative impact results on neighbouring dwelling. This is achieved in the following ways:
- The replacement dwelling will have a total footprint of 321.0sq.m. which is 0.7sq.m. less than that of the existing dwelling¹;
 - The proposed ground floor level will be 0.8 metres higher than the existing ground floor level whilst having a ridge height only 0.5 metres higher than that of the existing dwelling;
 - Permeable surface treatment in the garden (see the Landscape Materials Plan);

¹ This is explained in full in the Design and Access Statement

- The proposal incorporates stone Gabion walls which allow water to pass through them and which help to enhance biodiversity on the site;
- The proposal includes a green roof, and two green walls.

4.6. The proposal incorporates an extensive landscaping scheme and an ecological mitigation scheme.

5. Planning Policy

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK 2024 (NPPF)

- 5.1. In December 2024, the Government published an updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This provides an overarching framework for the production of local policy documents and the consideration of development proposals.
- 5.2. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise (NPPF, paragraph 2).
- 5.3. The policies in the Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication (NPPF, paragraph 231).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 5.4. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF which, as already stated, is a material consideration in planning decisions (NPPF, paragraph 2) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 5.5. Sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. There was no specific definition of sustainable development within the original 2012 NPPF but its Ministerial Foreword stated that it concerned making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. These comments were formalised in paragraph 8 of the 2019 NPPF. The subsequent versions strengthen the wording in relation to the environmental objective which is now, “to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment”.
- 5.6. Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states that at its heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 states that for decision taking this means,

“approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or 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 “(the NPPF)” that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - 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 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”.

DECISION MAKING

- 5.7. Local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way (NPPF, paragraph 39). They should use “the full range of planning tools available” and “work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible” (NPPF, paragraph 39).
- 5.8. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible and within the statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicants in writing (NPPF, paragraph 48).
- 5.9. Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions (NPPF, paragraph 56).
- 5.10. Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided, unless there is a clear justification and the applicants writing consent is first obtained

CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- 5.11. Planning decisions should, according to paragraph 187 of the NPPF, contribute and enhance the natural and local environment.
- 5.12. Paragraph 193 states:

“if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused...

development whose primary objective is to consider and enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around development should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate”.
- 5.13. Paragraph 136 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of trees in new development. It states, inter alia,

“Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments,...that appropriate measures are taken to secure the long-term maintenance of newly planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible...”

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

- 5.14. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that in considering development proposals it should be ensured that, “sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location...”.
- 5.15. Paragraph 110 states, “...opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”.
- 5.16. Paragraph 116 states that “development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios”.

FLOOD RISK

- 5.17. New development should be planned for in ways that:
- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems; and
 - b) help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings in plans should reflect the Government’s policy for national technical standards.

NATIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE (NPPG)

- 5.18. The Department for Communities and Local Government operates the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The following sections of the NPPG have been assessed in relation to this application:

- Natural Environment;

- Design: Process and Tools;
- Flood Risk and Coastal Change.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.19. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires that development be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that in the determination of applications, the authority shall have regard to:

- The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application
- Any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application
- Any other material consideration.

5.20. In Wokingham Borough, the adopted Development Plan consists of:

- Core Strategy January 2010;
- Managing Development Delivery February 2014;
- Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan (falls within area of search for sand and gravel :108)

There is no made Neighbourhood Plan that relates to the site.

5.21. Other material policy considerations will arise from the following documents;

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD;
- Companion to the Sustainable;
- Design and Construction SPD;
- Interactive Borough Design Guide June 2012;
- Wokingham District Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment;
- Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD.

5.22. Policies considered material to this application are identified below.

Core Strategy January 2010 (CS)

Policy	Page No.	Description
CP1	34	Sustainable development
CP3	38	General principles for development
CP6	43	Managing travel demand
CP7	45	Biodiversity
CP9	49	Scale and location of development proposals
CP11	53	Proposals outside Development Limits
CP17	61	Housing Delivery

Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 (MDDLDP)

Policy	Page No.	Description
CC01	6	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CC02	7	Development Limits
CC03	9	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
CC04	12	Sustainable Design and Construction
CC06	17	Noise
CC07	18	Parking
CC09	21	Development and Flood Risk
CC10	24	Sustainable Drainage
TB07	35	Internal Space Standards
TB21	57	Landscape Character
TB23	60	Biodiversity and Development

SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING REGISTER

5.23. The proposed dwelling will be a self-build dwelling. A comparison of the number of groups and individuals on the Council's Self-Build and Custom Build Register and the number of planning permissions for such dwellings granted since 2016 shows an estimated shortfall of 307 self-build and custom build dwellings. This figure has been calculated using the figures issued by the MHCLG which include those for 2022-2023.

FIVE-YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY POSITION

- 5.24. The Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement published on 30 January 2025 states that the Borough's total deliverable housing in years for 01/04/2024-31/03/2029 is 1.7 years supply.

EMERGING PLANS

- 5.25. The Wokingham Borough Local Plan 2023-2040 proposed Submission Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an Independent Planning Inspector on 28 February 2025. Dates for hearing sessions have not yet been released on the Council website.
- 5.26. As the policies of this Plan can still change significantly, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 49, little weight can be attached to it. Its policies are not therefore considered in this Planning Statement.
- 5.27. The Draft Charvil Regulation 15 Neighbourhood Development Plan, on which the Parish Council is consulting between 1 September to 13 October 2025, is at an early stage in its formation. As policies are likely to change significantly before adoption, little weight can be attached to them and the policies are not therefore considered in this Planning Statement.

6. Material Planning Considerations

DECISION MAKING

- 6.1. The determination of an application for planning permission is to be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70(2) TCPA 1990 provides that the decision-maker shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA 2004) provides:

‘If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise’.

- 6.2. The NPPF is a material consideration for these purposes, but it is policy not statute and does not displace the statutory presumption in favour of the development plan: see NPPF paragraphs 2 and 12. It must be exercised consistently with the statutory scheme giving primacy to the development plan, and not displace or distort it: *Suffolk Coastal DC v Hopkins Homes Ltd*¹.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.3. The proposed replacement dwelling is located outside designated development limits and within the countryside. CS Policy CP11 states that in these locations, in the case of replacement dwellings, the proposal must:
- “i. Bring about environmental improvements; or
 - ii. Not result in the inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building”.
- 6.4. The proposed development will bring about environmental improvements in accordance with clause ‘i’ in the following ways:
- As explained in full under the heading, ‘Flooding and Drainage’, the proposal will result in a dwelling with a smaller footprint, which means that it will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Additionally, it will feature higher floor levels than the existing dwelling. It is therefore more flood resilient and will reduce the impact of built development on the flood plain.

¹ [2017] UKSC 37, per Lord Carnwath at [21]

- A landscape scheme is proposed which will ensure that the existing crazy paving is removed and the drive and the turning/parking area to the front of the dwelling and beside the carport comprises a permeable resin bound material (see Landscape Materials Plan);
- The proposal includes a green roof and gabion wall that encourage vegetation to grow naturally and space for small mammals and insects (see page 16 of the DAS);
- Two green walls are proposed. The first will be the south facing carport pergola structure and the second, the wall of the elevated entrance walkway (see page 16 of the DAS). These will promote additional plant growth;
- The landscaping scheme includes detailed planting information in the Planting Schedule. This includes 10 trees and 75 linear metres of hedging;
- Bat boxes, hedgehog houses and bird boxes are proposed to enhance and promote biodiversity. In addition, the applicants will accept a condition attached to any permission granted to require the submission of details of the location of integral bat tubes;
- As outlined in the DAS, the proposal incorporates numerous sustainability measures to reduce its carbon footprint (see page 22). This is likely to mean the proposed dwelling will have a carbon footprint significantly smaller than that of the existing dwelling.

6.5. The proposed development will not result in the inappropriate increase in the scale, form or footprint of the original building in accordance with clause 'ii' of CS Policy CP11 for the following reasons:

- As already explained, the footprint of the dwelling is smaller than that of the existing dwelling;
- The essential scale and form of the proposed dwelling were examined as part of the previous application, which was withdrawn. As a result of comments from the case officer, the position of the dwelling was amended. This meant that the case officer considered the design to be acceptable. It is therefore assumed that this applies to the current scheme and that the proposal will not result in "inappropriate increases in the scale form or footprint of the original building".

6.6. Thus, the proposal complies with CS Policy CP11 and the principle of the development is acceptable in the light of the locational development plan policies.

6.7. Nonetheless, it is noted that the locational policies of the development plan in respect to this proposal are out of date because the Council's housing land supply is just 1.7 years. This means the Council should grant planning permission for this proposal unless:

- the application of policies in this Framework "(the NPPF)" that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- 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".

6.8. This will be discussed later in this Statement under the heading, "Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development".

CONSIDERATION OF OTHER ADOPTED POLICY

DESIGN

6.9. CS Policy CP3 sets out general principles of development, some of which relate to design. Thus clause (a) states that the proposal must be of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and without detriment to the amenity of adjoining land users. The latter is considered under the heading "Amenity". The rest of this clause is considered below.

6.10. It is considered the proposed activity on site, which is that related to a single dwelling, is the same as the existing. Therefore, no detriment will result.

6.11. The siting of the proposed dwelling will be away from the boundary with the neighbouring property. In addition, because the existing garage will be demolished, the property will appear to be centred on the site. This reflects the spacing of dwellings in the linear development of which Chilterns forms a part. This will be a significant improvement on the close proximity of the existing dwelling and garage at Chilterns and the neighbouring property shown in the aerial photograph in Figure 2.

6.12. As stated in paragraph 6.5 above, the scale and built form of the dwelling were considered by the case officer of the previous application and found to be acceptable. As no new material considerations in relation to this scale/mass and form have been introduced in the current proposal, it is assumed this too is acceptable.

- 6.13. The dominant facing material is stained vertical timber cladding. This is to reflect the building's context in amongst mature planting and trees. The timber will be stained to help the property blend with this.
- 6.14. Policy TB07 of the MDDLDP sets out internal space standards for dwellings. It sets out that 4 bedroom houses should provide a minimum of 100 sq m of gross internal floorspace. The policy also sets out a minimum combined floor area of living, dining and kitchen space. It goes without saying that the provision of floorspace is well in excess of that in the policy and will provide the occupants with a very comfortable dwelling.
- 6.15. The proposal does therefore comply with both policies CS Policy CP3 and MDDLDP Policy TB07 which relate to design. In addition, it complies with the principles of the Borough Design Guide by the way in which it has considered context, particularly in relation to the siting of the dwelling and the chosen materials.

AMENITY

- 6.16. The design details have been amended since the previous application was submitted to address the concerns of neighbouring residents.
- 6.17. As already stated, the current proposal will mean that built development is significantly further from the neighbouring dwelling and the shared boundary than at present. This is clearly shown on the Proposed Front Elevation and the Proposed Ground Floor Plan (dwg no. 333(PL)120) which shows the proposed dwelling and the outline of the existing property.
- 6.18. The Landscape Materials Plan indicates that the area where the garage/store is currently located is proposed to feature new hedging along the boundary and meadow planting. The Planting Plan gives details of the hedging proposed to line the boundary shared with the neighbouring property.
- 6.19. This hedging will be *taxus baccata* or *prunus laurocerasus*. It will be circa 2.5 metres in height at planting, and is expected to be 2.75metres after pruning at the end of year 1, 3 metres after pruning at the end of year 2 and within 5 years will be 3.4 metres in height. It will then be maintained at this height with regular pruning.
- 6.20. This hedging has been introduced in response to concerns of overlooking from the proposed rear terrace onto the patio of the neighbouring rear dwelling. In addition, the previous external staircase of this side of the property has been removed.
- 6.21. The rear terrace has a floor level that is 1.7m above ground level. The average height of a man in the United Kingdom is 1.75 metres. Thus the total height of a man standing on the terrace

will be 3.45m. This means that when fully grown, taking into account the distance of the terrace from the boundary shared with the neighbour, no overlooking will be caused.

- 6.22. The neighbour also expressed concern about noise levels. As the use of the site will not change, there is no reason to suppose that the noise levels from the proposed dwelling will be any different from those currently arising from it and its garden.
- 6.23. Thus, it is clear that the proposed siting of the dwelling and the proposed landscaping scheme will mean that the proposal will not result in any significantly adverse impact on the occupants of the neighbouring dwelling.

ECOLOGY

- 6.24. NPPF paragraph 87(d) states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the local environment by “minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity by... incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats, and hedgehogs”. This is precisely what this proposal aims to achieve.
- 6.25. Bat surveys were undertaken in 2022 and 2025. These indicate that the existing dwelling supports three soprano pipistrelles roosts for single bats. As this proposal includes the demolition of the existing dwelling, a Bat Mitigation Strategy has been proposed to ensure that opportunities for roosting bats are retained and enhanced post-development. This strategy also recommends that any lighting scheme takes into account bats in the surrounding area as well as at the site. Such a scheme can be confirmed as a result of a condition attached to any planning permission granted.
- 6.26. In addition, as set out in the Biodiversity and Ecology section of the DAS, bird boxes will be installed, hedgehog houses will be introduced into the garden, and to minimise the low risk of harming great crested newts, non-licensed avoidance measures will follow in accordance with Wokingham Borough Council’s “Newt Avoidance Method Statement”. Thus, once planning permission is granted, an application for a low-impact licence will be submitted to Natural England in relation to the demolition of the existing house.
- 6.27. The design of the dwelling has also taken into account the need to enhance biodiversity. The gabion walls are likely to become a home for small mammals and insects, whilst the green roof and the two green walls (see pages 15 and 16 of the DAS) will contribute to the enhancement.
- 6.28. Thus as a result of these measures and the proposed landscaping scheme, it is envisaged that there will be an overall net gain in biodiversity as explained below.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- 6.29. This is a proposal for a self-build dwelling. This will be evidenced by a Unilateral Undertaking. As the site has an area of 0.4 hectares, due to an exemption for properties of this type on this size of site, there is no need to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain.
- 6.30. Nonetheless, a biodiversity gain is likely to result due to the inclusion in the scheme of the following:
- The planting of 35 linear metres of *taxus baccata* or *prunus laurocerasus* along the side site boundary;
 - The planting of 40 linear metres of *taxus baccata* in the front garden;
 - The planting of 10 trees as detailed in the Planting Schedule;
 - A total of 119sq.m. of general planting as detailed in Planting Schedule which includes shrubs, grasses, ferns and herbaceous plants;
 - The enhancement of existing hedgerow and trees along the north eastern site boundary (see landscape materials plan);
 - Gabion walls will provide places where vegetation can grow naturally and for small mammals and insects;
 - A green roof is proposed;
 - Bird boxes will be placed on site;
 - Hedgehog houses will be provided;
 - A green wall will be provided on the south facing pergola structure and the wall of the elevated entrance walkway.

TREES AND LANDSCAPING

- 6.31. Policy CC03 of the MDDD states that development proposals should show that they have considered both linkages with existing green infrastructure and “protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features”. To this end, this application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- 6.32. The tree survey identified 8 Category A trees, 18 Category B trees and 10 Category C trees and hedges. Two trees were found to be unsuitable for retention (Category U).

- 6.33. The second part of the report is the Arboricultural Impact Assessment. This sets out that those trees to be removed to facilitate development are a category U apple trees, a category C mixed hedge and a category C rowan and goat willow. Thus, the only trees to be removed are low quality.
- 6.34. Ample mitigation (as stated in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment) will be made for this small loss of poor quality trees by the planting of 10 trees (see landscape materials plan) and the planting of 75 linear metres of hedging.
- 6.35. Where the proposal is likely to result in an incursion into root protection areas (rpas), mitigation will be applied. That mitigation, which is specific to the different circumstances and trees, is set out in detail in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment. In addition, this also sets out tree protection measures.
- 6.36. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment concludes that by following the mitigation measures, the retained trees can be successfully integrated into the development without compromising their health or longevity. In this way, this proposal complies with Policy CC03 of the MDDD.

LANDSCAPE

- 6.37. This is a scheme for a replacement dwelling and landscaping. The site already contains trees and hedges, which provide screening of the existing dwelling: glimpses of this are seen through the existing vegetation. In addition, a landscaping scheme is proposed which will add to this and the scheme has been designed to sit below the tree line of the trees that line the site's north eastern boundary.
- 6.38. It is noted that in relation to the previous application, the Tree and Landscape Officer stated that the scheme, "does not unduly change the overall landscape impact due to the retained green infrastructure and off-site landscape features such as the islet". This comment will also apply to the current proposal.
- 6.39. Thus, the Tree and Landscape Officer recommended the scheme for approval subject to condition and it is therefore assumed they will do the same in this case.

ACCESS AND PARKING

- 6.40. As this is a replacement dwelling, the existing access will be used and it is proposed to install a new gate. The access is via a track which goes no further than the Chilterns access point. This means that no delay to other traffic will be caused by a car waiting on the track to access the property. No issues of highways safety will therefore result.

- 6.41. The replacement dwelling will be well served by public footpaths enabling sustainable pedestrian access to nearby settlements. Charvil is a 1 mile walk away via a footpath and public byway. The following services and venues are located there: a Parish Hall, a sports pavilion, two public houses, a petrol station, a local store a primary school and a number of playing fields and play grounds.
- 6.42. Sonning is a 1.6 mile walk away via the riverside footpath. This settlement benefits from NHS surgeries, a primary school, restaurants, public houses and tea rooms, a church and bus services to surrounding towns. Thus, future occupants will have the option of accessing services using sustainable means of transport, especially in periods of good weather. Nonetheless, NPPF paragraph 110 does emphasise that “opportunities will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making”. In addition, vehicle use to and from the site is not likely to change as the proposal is for a replacement dwelling, not a dwelling on a greenfield site.
- 6.43. CP6 of the CS states inter alia “planning permission will be granted for schemes that ...provide appropriate vehicular parking, having regard to car ownership”. The Wokingham Borough Council parking demand calculation sheet indicates that the proposed development should have 2 allocated spaces and 0.5 unallocated spaces. Accordingly, the proposed car port will accommodate two cars and one dedicated car parking space will lie outside the car port. The proposed parking therefore accords with Council policy.
- 6.44. Undercover, lockable cycle storage is proposed in the ground floor of the proposed annex. This is of sufficient size to accommodate the number of cycles likely to be owned by the residents of the proposed dwelling.
- 6.45. It is noted that in relation to the previous application for a dwelling on the site, the Highway Department had no objection subject to conditions being attached to any planning permission granted.

FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

- 6.46. Policy CC09 of the MDDLDP states that “All sources of flood risk...must be taken into account at all stages to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding”. The proposed dwelling will lie in flood zone 3, and for that reason, even though the proposed is a replacement dwelling, the consideration of the risk of flooding is at the heart of the design.
- 6.47. This has resulted in a proposal that, in accordance with Policy CC09 clause 4b, has been designed to:

1. “Be safe for its lifetime, taking into account the vulnerability of its users;
2. Not increase flood risk in any form elsewhere and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall;
3. Incorporate flood resilient and resistant measures into the design.”

Accordingly, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to illustrate this is submitted as a part of this application.

- 6.48. Policy CC09 specifies that the sequential test will not be required in the case of a single replacement dwelling. This is the case in this instance. This is also borne out by the recent change in the Planning Practice Guidance, Flood Risk and Coastal Change Planning Practice Guidance which states:

“Where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates clearly that the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development (therefore addressing the risks identified e.g. by Environment Agency flood risk mapping), without increasing flood risk elsewhere, then the sequential test need not be applied.”

- 6.49. The FRA includes the exception test: it demonstrates that this proposal satisfies the terms of that test.
- 6.50. Of particular note, the proposed dwelling will not remove flood storage space and will not increase flood risk elsewhere. This is because the existing buildings and outbuildings have a footprint of 321.7sq.m, whilst the proposed buildings, including the annexe and carport structure, will have a footprint of 321.01sq.m. Thus there will be a reduction in building footprint on the site which will ensure there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere.
- 6.51. The FRA also explains the way in which the proposal will be safe for its lifetime. It states at the bottom of page 12, “With reference to point (b) above, the flood risk to the site will be managed by raising ground floor levels to a minimum of 36.2m AOD. This will ensure that the building will be flood free internally during the 1% AEP plus 35% CC event, allowing a freeboard of 860mm.”
- 6.52. The FRA concludes that overall the proposal will result in additional flood storage and that the development will be safe for its lifetime. In this way it overcomes the Environment Agency objections to the previous scheme. There are therefore no grounds related to flooding for this proposal not to be recommended for approval.

SELF-BUILD HOUSING

- 6.53. The proposed dwelling will be a self-build dwelling. This will be evidenced by the submission of a Unilateral Undertaking.
- 6.54. Within Wokingham Borough there is a significant shortfall in the provision of self-build dwellings. As stated in paragraph 5.23 this is estimated to be 307. The current proposal will help to meet this shortfall.

PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 6.55. As Wokingham Borough Council does not have a five year housing land supply, the presumption in favour of development as set out in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, applies. This states, “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:
1. the application of policies in this Framework “(the NPPF)” that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 2. 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”.
- 6.56. As demonstrated by this Planning Statement, there are no policies in the NPPF which give a clear reason for refusing this proposal.
- 6.57. The Planning Statement has also demonstrated that the benefits of the application clearly outweigh any negatives of the scheme when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.
- 6.58. Any potential disadvantages identified by Consultant reports or in this Planning Statement will be mitigated as already stated. The exception is that the location of this site is not as sustainable as a site, for instance, in a town centre. However, there is already a dwelling on the site and the NPPF does recognise the difference in the potential for sustainable transport solutions to be achieved in rural and urban locations. Thus, as there are opportunities for walking to services, this is not considered to be a significant adverse factor.
- 6.59. For this reason, once mitigation has taken place, no disbenefits will remain. There will, however, be multiple benefits to this scheme:
1. A self-build dwelling will be provided where there is a significant shortfall;

2. An unattractive, outdated bungalow will be replaced by an architect designed contemporary dwelling which reflects its context on Thames Drive;
3. The proposed dwelling will be located in a central position in the site, unlike that existing, and will therefore better reflect the pattern of development on Thames Drive;
4. Built development will be located significantly further from the boundary shared with Island cottage: this means that the existing cramped appearance will be removed;
5. The proposal takes into account the latest flood risk and climate change data and is therefore more flood resilient than the existing dwelling and will result in additional flood storage being provided;
6. The proposed dwelling will be built to current Building Regulation standards and incorporates numerous features to ensure that its carbon footprint is reduced and will be significantly smaller than that of the existing dwelling;
7. The proposed landscape scheme is likely to result in significant biodiversity gain as set out in paragraph 6.31 above. This includes the planting of 10 trees and 75 linear metres of hedge.

6.60. For the above reasons, there can be little doubt that the benefits of this proposal greatly outweigh the disadvantages. For these reasons, this planning application should be approved without delay.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. This Planning Support Statement (PSS) has been prepared on behalf of the applicant, Mr and Mrs Bailes in respect of 'the site', which comprises the dwelling Chilterns and its curtilage which is located on Thames Drive, Charvil, Wokingham.
- 7.2. This application proposes the replacement of a dwelling of no architectural or historic merit with a self build, two storey dwelling, an annexe to accommodate a study and attached two bay carport and a comprehensive landscaping scheme. This proposal will be implemented following the demolition of the existing dwelling, garage and gatehouse structure.
- 7.3. This Planning Support Statement demonstrates that the proposed replacement dwelling at Chilterns fully accords with the objectives of national and local planning policy. The scheme represents an environmentally sensitive and context-led redevelopment that replaces an outdated dwelling with a sustainable, contemporary self-build home. Through its fabric-first design, use of renewable technologies, and comprehensive landscaping, the proposal achieves clear environmental improvements, enhances biodiversity, and delivers a dwelling that is flood-resilient and energy-efficient.
- 7.4. The development will integrate harmoniously within the established pattern of Thames Drive, improving the visual and spatial relationship with neighbouring properties while addressing previous concerns regarding amenity and flood risk. It will also contribute positively to Wokingham Borough's identified shortfall in self-build housing provision.
- 7.5. Accordingly, the proposal complies with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations that indicate planning permission should not be granted. In line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF, the application should therefore be approved without delay. This conclusion demonstrates that objections to the previous scheme have been overcome.
- 7.6. This completes the Planning Statement.



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