



Planning

Planning Statement

Client: **Mr Robert Evans**

Land Adjacent to Woodlands

**Wick Hill Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40
3PZ**

*Erection of single storey dwelling with
associated landscaping and parking, following
demolition of existing building.*

Matthew Miller **BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI**

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION	2
3. PLANNING HISTORY	2
4. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS	3
5. POLICY ASSESSMENT	5
6. CONCLUSION	24

List of Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Appeal Decision APP/X0360/W/24/3342812
- Appendix 2 – Approval 231459 details

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the erection of a single storey, two bedroom dwelling, with associated parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing building.
- 1.2 This planning statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3 In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, and the following documents:
- WH 01 Location Plan/Site Plan
 - WH 02 Plans and Elevations
 - John Wenman – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
 - John Wenman - Preliminary Roost Assessment
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site consists of a parcel of land adjoining the dwellinghouse of Woodlands to the east. It takes access from Wick Hill Lane, a non-through road which connects to Nine Mile Ride (the B3430) to the north.
- 2.2 Wick Hill Lane contains a number of detached residential properties of varying scales, connecting to historical agricultural land, particularly further towards the terminus of the highway. It lies within the southern end of the defined settlement of Finchampstead, with sections of land adjoining the immediate lane being a mix of defined settlement and countryside, in a somewhat non-linear fashion.
- 2.3 The site contains an existing storage building (also labelled as a garage in the submitted plans), which is single storey in height, and with a rectangular footprint, comprised of pre-fabricated sheeting. An existing access point on to Wick Hill Lane is present on its western boundary. The remainder of the site is planted.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 The site does not contain any Planning History in terms of the individual parcel of land, as compared to any historical connection to the property of Woodlands.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 The National Design Guide (2019) identifies that “well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them. They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, taking into account factors such as the ageing population and cultural differences. They are adequate in size, fit for purpose and are adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants over time” (para 120-121).
- 4.2 Regarding the requirements of NPPG Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 14-029-20140306 in respect of Design and Access Statements, the proposal is described as follows:
- 4.3 **Use and Amount:** The proposed development involves the erection of 1no. residential dwelling with associated residential curtilage. This would follow the demolition of the existing timber-clad building present on site.
- 4.4 **Layout, Scale and Appearance:** The proposed dwelling would be single storey, comprising two bedrooms. It would involve a dual-pitched roof with 3no. roof windows on the rear elevation, and a gabled porch. External materials would consist of facing red brick, with weatherboard cladding, and a grey slate roof.
- 4.5 **Landscaping:** The proposal would retain the principal established trees, and would involve improving the existing somewhat unkempt soft landscaping to provide a formalised garden space surrounding the dwelling.
- 4.6 **Access & Parking:** The proposal would involve an alteration to the existing access point from Wick Hill Lane, extending this access

southeast-wards. The proposed driveway, making use of the existing accessway, would accommodate two parking spaces.

5. Policy Assessment

- 5.1 **Principle of Development:** Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan

- 5.2 Wokingham Borough Council's adopted Development Plan includes the Wokingham Core Strategy (2010) ('CS'), Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)('LP'). The Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (2023) ('NP') also applies to the site.
- 5.3 The Wokingham Local Plan Update was subject to Part 2 Hearings held between March and June 2026. Following these hearings, the Inspectors have provided written comments to the Council regarding suggested alterations. It is also noted that this was prior to the publication of the August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') which may require further alterations. As a consequence, the Local Plan Update is provided limited weight at this time.
- 5.4 The site lies outside of the defined settlement and within countryside, as defined on the Council's Policies Map. However, the site not only adjoins the defined settlement, it is enveloped by it, as shown by Figure 1 below. This has key relevance as explained further within the Statement below.

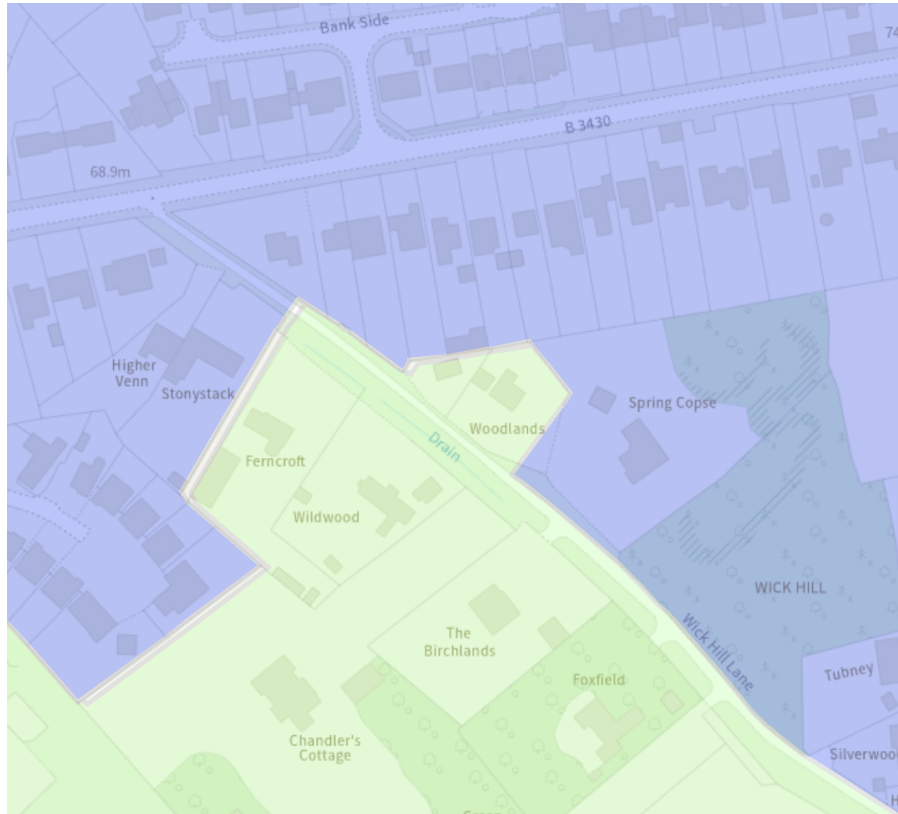


Figure 1: Extent of the defined settlement in purple (Source: Council Planning Policies and Constraints Map)

- 5.5 CS Policy CP1 requires proposals to contribute positively to the character of the settlement and to meet identified housing needs. In doing so it does recognise the Council's housing demands, however the policy itself is not explicitly a spatial development policy.
- 5.6 CS Policy CP3 sets out the general principles for development, relating to various matters including character, design, residential amenity, and landscaping, etc.
- 5.7 MDD Policy CC02 seeks to impose development limits in the form of preventing new dwellings outside defined settlement boundaries, unless expressly supported by other policies.
- 5.8 CS Policy CP9 relates development scale to facilities, services and accessibility, and supports additional development within the limits

of settlements according to their place in the hierarchy. Finchampstead North is a modest-development location.

- 5.9 The extent of the modest-development location aligns with the boundaries of the settlement as visualised in Figure 1 above. Within this site, a unique situation arises where residential properties are deemed to be within this locational sustainability designation despite being further from the nearest facilities (etc.) than the application site. In purely locational sustainability terms, it would therefore be illogical to suggest this site cannot accommodate a modest level of development in locational sustainability terms, whilst sites further southeastwards in Wick Hill Lane can.
- 5.10 CS Policy CP11 seeks to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality and character of the local environment. In seeking to achieve these overarching objectives, the Policy states that proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted, except for a list of specific development.
- 5.11 Exception 2) of Policy CP11 enables development which does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original building. In this instance, the site contains an existing single storey building which is to be demolished, and a new single storey dwelling erected over the same footprint, albeit slightly larger.
- 5.12 In this regard the proposal satisfies criterion 2) of CP11. In any case, the overarching consideration is the key tests of CP11 which are to protect the separate identity of settlements and to maintain the quality and character of the local environment, would be considered preserved by this development, especially as in essence it forms an infill development on previously developed land. In other terms, it would not project development into an otherwise undeveloped landscape. This approach is consistent with appeal decision

APP/X0360/W/24/3342812 (Appendix 1), where the Inspector recognised that CP11 must be applied by reference to its stated objectives and not simply by treating a location outside development limits as inherently harmful.

5.13 NP Policy AHD1 supports housing within Development Locations and requires development outside them to accord with national and Borough policy. NP Policy D3, where applicable to current or former garden land, also includes a Development Location requirement alongside detailed design, amenity and access criteria.

5.14 MDD Policy TB06 similarly addresses development of private residential gardens, but resists it where harmful effects in terms of character layout (etc.) arise rather than imposing NP Policy D3(8)'s separate locational test. Subject to its applicability to this land, the small plot must be judged against TB06's character, amenity, access and layout safeguards.

5.15 The conclusions of the above are then discussed in the overall Principle of Development conclusion sub-section below, following an examination of the Borough's housing supply and national policy, which follows.

Housing Supply

5.16 Wokingham Borough Council's latest published Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement assesses the position at 31 March 2025. It identifies 3,453 deliverable dwellings against a five-year requirement of 6,909 dwellings, equivalent to 2.5 years of supply. The Council therefore cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, having a significant shortfall that is literally providing half the houses it requires.

5.17 The proposal would provide one dwelling and should not be overstated numerically, but neither should its contribution be disregarded, adding to supply in a Borough with a substantial shortfall. The national policy consequence of that shortfall is especially important because the 2026 NPPF now contains a specific decision-making route for housing outside settlements where unmet need exists. An examination of this follows below.

National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

5.18 The August 2026 NPPF directs outside-settlement proposals to S5. Its route at S5(1)(j)(i) for residential development includes addressing evidenced unmet need (where a five-year supply cannot be demonstrated), provided the site is physically well related to an existing settlement and the scale can be accommodated by existing or proposed infrastructure. In applying this test, approval is to be given unless adverse effects substantially outweigh the benefits.

5.19 As again visualised by Figure 1, the site's relationship to the Nine Mile Ride residential area and the recognised settlement of Finchampstead North, provides clear evidence that the site is physically well related to an existing settlement. The site not only adjoins settlement; it is enveloped by it.

5.20 Turning to the scale of the proposal in respect of existing infrastructure, the approach taken in paragraphs 5.8 and 5.9 can be repeated here. In the added context of one proposed dwelling, attention can also be drawn to planning approval reference 231459 (and its subsequent Section 73 approval) at Silver Wood, Wick Hill Lane, further to the southeast (Appendix 2). This demonstrates the Council's acceptance in principle of a dwelling in a location further south-east along Wick Hill Lane and, consequently, further from nearby services and facilities.

- 5.21 Therefore, the 'modest' development principles highlighted by CS Policy CP9 must apply to the application site, and as a consequence the proposal is acceptable in relation to infrastructure.
- 5.22 A second route under NPPF Policy S5 applies to the site – which is under part (1)(d) with the redevelopment of previously developed land, explicitly also including the enabling of a change of use to residential. Therefore, the existing use of the land, whether considered residential or commercial, is a moot point. The site is unmistakably previously developed through the existing building and hardsurfacing.
- 5.23 The proposal then benefits from a further route/test enabled by NPPF Policy S5, relating to the acceptability of residential development outside settlements. Specifically, S5(1)(e) enables limited infilling within groups of housing. This existing housing does not have to be within settlement for this test to apply (noting the neighbouring dwelling of Woodlands and the dwellings on the opposite side of Wick Hill Lane).
- 5.24 The submitted Block Plan and Figure 1 both explicitly demonstrate that the proposal is sited within an established residential area, bordered on all sides by other residential units. The development would be unquestionably an infill.
- 5.25 NPPF Policy HO7(1) expressly says that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing homes which contribute towards evidenced accommodation needs.
- 5.26 Attention is also required to be given to Annex A of the NPPF. Within this, paragraph 2 sets out that Development Plan policies (including parts of those policies) which are materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies within the NPPF should be given very limited weight, where they have been examined and adopted prior to the

August 2026 version. As clarification, policies should not be given reduced weight simply because they were adopted prior to the publication – instead it is a matter of consistency.

Conclusion

- 5.27 The Development Plan is the statutory starting point. The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary and there is therefore a degree of conflict with the established spatial approach contained within Policies CP9, CC02 and the corresponding locational provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, that policy position must be considered in the particular physical circumstances of the site. It immediately adjoins and is effectively enveloped by established residential development and does not represent an outward projection of built development into otherwise undeveloped countryside.
- 5.28 Importantly, the proposal also accords with the overarching objectives of CS Policy CP11, insofar as the replacement of the existing single-storey building with a modest single-storey dwelling would not result in excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the existing built form. More fundamentally, the proposal would preserve the underlying purposes of CP11 by maintaining settlement identity and avoiding material harm to the quality and character of the countryside.
- 5.29 The August 2026 NPPF provides particularly strong support for the principle of development. The proposal benefits from three separate routes under Policy S5. First, under S5(1)(j)(i) it would contribute towards an evidenced unmet housing need in a Borough with only a 2.5-year housing land supply, on a site which is physically well related to the existing settlement and where the scale of one dwelling can readily be accommodated by existing infrastructure. Secondly,

S5(1)(d) supports the redevelopment of previously developed land, which is directly relevant given the existing building and hardstanding. Thirdly, S5(1)(e) supports limited infilling within groups of houses; the proposal plainly occupies such an infill position within the established residential context surrounding the site.

5.30 These provisions materially alter the weight to be attached to the older restrictive spatial policies, noting Paragraph 2 of the NPPF's Annex A. In this case, insofar as the older settlement-boundary provisions would prevent development which falls squarely within the forms of development now expressly supported by S5, those restrictive elements should attract very limited weight.

5.31 Therefore, overall the principle of development is strongly supported. The proposal accords with the overarching objectives of CP11, independently, with three separate provisions of NPPF Policy S5. When the Council's substantial housing shortfall, the site's enclosed and well-related residential context, and the effect of Annex A are considered together, the material considerations decisively support the provision of a single dwelling in this location.

5.32 **Character and Appearance of the Area:** In addition to Policy CP11 as already explored in this Statement, CS Policy CP3 expects proposals to be appropriate in elements including scale, form and character to their surroundings, as well as to protect landscape features, and to avoid overdevelopment of the site.

5.33 MDD Policy TB21 seeks for development to be informed by, and to respect, the Borough's defined landscape character areas (noting that the entire Borough is subject to these character areas, as opposed to them being valued landscapes). With the proposal being an infill plot and not involving any encroachment into the open countryside or otherwise undeveloped land, it is not considered that the proposal

would have any material impact upon wider landscape character. Instead, the focus is given to the more immediate general character and design implications of the proposal.

- 5.34 Wick Hill Lane has a somewhat transitional character. The immediate surroundings of the application site and further north/northwestwards are of a suburban residential nature. This leads further southeastwards beyond the site surroundings to a less developed and historically agricultural character. There is variation in dwelling size (including overall plot size) as well as individual design vernacular. Dwellings are detached, and the building line is broken up by instances of detached garages sited forwards of the main dwellings. One such example of the variation is the dwelling approved under application reference 231459 (Appendix 2), which provides a chalet bungalow style dwelling forward of the building line and in a comparatively smaller plot than the surroundings.
- 5.35 Whilst each application must be assessed on its own merits, that permission is relevant evidence that the local character is capable of accommodating more modest residential plots and differing forms of detached residential development without such characteristics being inherently unacceptable.
- 5.36 Against this context, the application proposal would not introduce an alien or unprecedented form of development. Its bungalow form is deliberately modest and represents a proportionate response to the dimensions of the plot. The single-storey scale assists in ensuring that the building remains visually subordinate within the wider residential setting and avoids attempting to accommodate a larger or more assertive dwelling which could appear cramped or overdeveloped within the site.

- 5.37 The proposal is therefore best understood as a bespoke response to its infill nature. The relatively modest plot size does not, of itself, amount to overdevelopment. Rather, the relevant test under Policy CP3 is whether the building can be accommodated comfortably within the site and whether its scale and form respond appropriately to the surrounding pattern of development. In those respects, the restrained scale and simple building form provide an appropriate response to the particular characteristics of the plot.
- 5.38 Architecturally, the proposal adopts a simple domestic form which reflects its modest scale. The proposed timber cladding, brick plinth and restrained roof materials provide a coherent palette and avoid unnecessary architectural complexity. The materials also assist in giving the building a softer and less visually assertive appearance than would arise from a more substantial or conventionally suburban two-storey dwelling.
- 5.39 Overall, the proposal would therefore sit comfortably within the varied and transitional character of Wick Hill Lane. It would make efficient use of an existing developed infill plot without projecting built development into undeveloped countryside, and its scale, form, siting and architectural treatment provide an appropriately restrained response to the site. The proposal is therefore considered consistent with the relevant character and design objectives of Core Strategy Policy CP3 and MDD Policy TB21.
- 5.40 **Trees and Landscaping:** CS Policy CP3 requires development to respect important landscape features, whilst MDD Policy CC03 seeks to protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features and to incorporate high-quality planting and landscaping as an integral part of development. NP Policy IRS6 similarly seeks the retention of mature and important trees and encourages additional planting which is appropriate to the character of the area.

- 5.41 Trees and vegetation make a positive contribution to the verdant character of Wick Hill Lane and are therefore an important component of the development. Accordingly, the proposal does not undertake complete clearance of the site or the removal of the established landscape structure which characterises the lane. The proposed dwelling is accommodated within an already developed part of the plot presently occupied by the garage/storage building and associated hardstanding. The larger trees shown around the north-western side of the site are not identified for removal as part of the development.
- 5.42 The submitted Site Plan provides a positive landscaping strategy alongside the development. In particular, the existing holly is identified for retention, whilst the cypress planting is proposed to be removed. The existing beech boundary hedge adjoining Woodlands, which has previously been removed, is proposed to be reinstated, together with additional tree planting within the application site. This ensures that landscaping is treated as an integral part of the scheme rather than simply as residual treatment around the proposed dwelling.
- 5.43 The removal of the cypress should also be considered in the context of the wider landscape proposals rather than as an isolated loss. Its removal enables the site to accommodate a more coherent landscape treatment, including replacement planting of species more appropriate to the domestic and semi-rural character of Wick Hill Lane. The proposed reinstatement of hedging and additional tree planting would reinforce the green boundaries of the plot and assist in maintaining, as well as enhancing, the established leafy character of the street scene.
- 5.44 This landscape approach is particularly appropriate given the proposal's position at the transition between the more suburban

development around Nine Mile Ride and the progressively looser character further along Wick Hill Lane. Retaining the principal landscape framework and reinforcing it through new planting would allow the dwelling to remain visually contained within the established residential setting. Rather than urbanising or opening up the site, the landscaping proposals would maintain the sense of enclosure which already characterises the plot.

- 5.45 The proposal would therefore retain the important landscape characteristics of the site whilst providing opportunities for enhancement through replacement hedging and additional tree planting. Subject to appropriate protection of retained trees during demolition and construction, the development would accord with the relevant objectives of Policies CP3, CC03 and IRS6. Where necessary, detailed tree-protection measures can be secured by condition.
- 5.46 **Residential Amenity:** Core Strategy Policy CP3 requires development to safeguard the amenity of existing and future occupiers, whilst MDD Policy TB06 and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan Policy D3 similarly require residential development to avoid unacceptable effects in terms of privacy, outlook, daylight and the relationship between neighbouring properties.
- 5.47 The proposal has been deliberately designed as a single-storey bungalow in response to the nature of the site and its relationship with adjoining residential properties. The absence of first-floor accommodation materially limits the potential for overlooking and reduces the perceived scale and enclosure of the building when viewed from neighbouring gardens and dwellings.

- 5.48 Its modest height and pitched-roof form would ensure that it would not appear unduly dominant or overbearing when experienced from Woodlands or its associated garden.
- 5.49 To the north and north-west, the site adjoins the rear gardens of properties fronting Nine Mile Ride. These properties are separated from the proposed dwelling through established boundary treatments. Again, the single-storey form substantially limits any potential for direct overlooking. The proposal would therefore maintain an appropriate degree of privacy between the new dwelling and the existing residential properties which surround the site.
- 5.50 In terms of the amenity of future occupiers, the proposed dwelling would benefit from a clearly defined private external amenity area.
- 5.51 The proposal therefore accord with the relevant amenity objectives of Policies CP3, TB06 and D3.
- 5.52 **Transport and Parking:** Core Strategy Policy CP6 seeks to ensure that development is accessible and appropriately served by sustainable modes of transport, whilst MDD Policy CC07 requires development to make suitable provision for vehicular access, car parking and cycle parking having regard to the nature and scale of the development. The relevant consideration for this proposal is therefore whether a single dwelling can be accommodated without giving rise to highway safety concerns or unacceptable parking pressure.
- 5.53 The application site benefits from direct frontage to Wick Hill Lane and the submitted Site Plan identifies a dedicated access arrangement serving the proposed dwelling. The drawings also indicate the closure of the existing access at the north-western end of the plot, allowing vehicular movements to be rationalised to a single access point.

- 5.54 The proposal provides space for two vehicles within the site. For a single two-bedroom dwelling, this represents an above-minimum level of off-street parking and would avoid reliance upon parking on Wick Hill Lane.
- 5.55 The modest scale of the development is also material in highway terms. The proposal would generate the limited level of traffic ordinarily associated with a single dwelling and would not introduce a scale or intensity of movement comparable with a larger residential development. There is therefore no reason to consider that the additional vehicle movements associated with one dwelling would materially affect the operation or character of Wick Hill Lane, subject to the detailed access arrangement providing suitable visibility and safe entry and exit.
- 5.56 Cycle parking can be incorporated into the development through the provision of details to be secured by planning condition.
- 5.57 Refuse and recycling requirements for a single dwelling would be modest and can be accommodated within the application site. The plot provides sufficient external circulation space for the storage of domestic bins within the curtilage, adhering to established refuse collection arrangements for Wick Hill Lane.
- 5.58 Overall, the proposal would provide an appropriate access arrangement and sufficient off-street parking for a single dwelling. Given the very limited additional traffic generation associated with one residential unit, the development would not give rise to an unacceptable impact upon highway safety or the operation of Wick Hill Lane and is considered to accord with the relevant transport and parking objectives of Core Strategy Policy CP6 and MDD Policy CC07.
- 5.59 **Drainage and SuDS:** CS Policy CP1 and MDD Policies CC09 and CC10 seek to ensure that development appropriately manages flood

risk and surface water drainage, including through the use of sustainable drainage measures where appropriate.

- 5.60 The proposal is limited to a single dwelling on a small, previously developed plot located in Flood Zone One.
- 5.61 If required, details of the existing and proposed drainage arrangements, including the management of surface water and the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems where appropriate, can be secured by planning condition. Subject to said details, the proposal is considered capable of complying with the relevant requirements of Policies CP1, CC09 and CC10.
- 5.62 **Ecology:** Core Strategy Policies CP7 & CP8 and MDD Policy TB23 seek to protect biodiversity interests, designated sites and protected species, while requiring appropriate mitigation and ecological enhancement.
- 5.63 The application is supported by an updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (initially undertaken prior to the change in regulations), together with a separate Preliminary Roost Assessment. The site is approximately 0.03ha and principally comprises the existing building, gravel, bracken and scattered boundary trees. The bracken is identified as low-distinctiveness habitat, while the garage and gravel are of negligible ecological value.
- 5.64 The site is not itself ecologically designated and no irreplaceable habitat is present on or within 50m of the site. The appraisal also concludes that, having regard to the scale and nature of the development, adverse effects on nearby designated sites are highly unlikely.

- 5.65 The separate bat assessment found the garage to have negligible suitability for roosting bats, with no evidence of bat presence and no suitable roosting features. No further emergence surveys are required and demolition is considered highly unlikely to affect a bat roost or require an EPS mitigation licence. Precautionary measures would apply should bats unexpectedly be encountered.
- 5.66 The wider site does provide some limited foraging and commuting habitat for bats and other wildlife. The retained trees would continue to provide ecological connectivity, with the documents recommending sensitive lighting, protection of retained trees, precautionary measures for birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals, and biodiversity enhancements including bat/bird boxes and wildlife-friendly landscaping.
- 5.67 The BNG assessment identifies an on-site change of -18.91%, equivalent to a deficit of 0.24 habitat units. However, this was initially commenced prior to the change in relevant regulations, where sites under 0.2 hectares in size are now exempt from BNG (where it does not impact onsite priority habitat). As per paragraph 5.65 above, generalised non-numerical ecological enhancements can be secured by condition.
- 5.68 Overall, the ecological evidence identifies no overriding constraint to the development. Subject to the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures, the proposal is considered capable of complying with Policies CP7, CP8 and TB23.
- 5.69 **Sustainability and Energy:** The NPPF supports the transition of development to a low carbon future. The national Code for Sustainable Homes has now been abolished, however it is proposed that the development would conform to Part L of the Building Regulations which as of 2022 requires a 30% reduction than current

standards. By way of contributing to the reduction in carbon, the proposal would also achieve current building construction standards with added sustainability measures through;

- A. The limitation of the amount of inherent material, structure and embodied energy through the employment of good building standards to create an excellent SAP rating;
- B. Use of locally sourced, recycled materials and labour where practicable;
- C. Maximizing the use of natural light through proposed roof lights;
- D. Reduced internal water consumption of 110 litres per person per day through the incorporation of water efficient sanitary fittings, including low flow toilets and water efficient taps for wash basins;
- E. Refuse, recycling and composting facilities to be provided to work with the Council's existing waste and recycling collection service;
- F. 'A' rated electrical appliances and energy saving light fittings;
- G. 'A' rated double glazed windows with natural cross ventilation provision;
- H. Recycling of waste construction materials where practicable;
- I. Permeable driveway/parking spaces to avoid increase in surface water runoff;

5.70 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with sustainability objectives in this respect.

- 5.71 **Special Protection Area:** Core Strategy Policy CP8 requires residential development which could affect the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area ('SPA') to provide appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures so that there would be no adverse effect upon the integrity of the SPA. The Council applies three zones of influence around the SPA, including the 400m–5km zone, within which net new residential development is required to provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace ('SANG') and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring ('SAMM') mitigation.
- 5.72 The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identifies the nearest part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA approximately 880m east of the application site. The site therefore lies within the 400m–5km zone of influence. The proposal is for a single net additional dwelling and consequently falls within the category of residential development for which SPA mitigation is required.
- 5.73 The necessary mitigation can be provided through the Council's established approach, comprising an appropriate contribution towards SANG provision to provide alternative recreational opportunities and a SAMM contribution towards strategic access management and monitoring of the SPA. The Council expressly identifies these measures as the means by which new residential development within the 400m–5km zone can proceed without adversely affecting the integrity of the SPA.
- 5.74 The Applicant is willing to secure the necessary SANG and SAMM mitigation through the appropriate mechanism. Subject to this mitigation, the proposal would not result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, either alone or in combination with other development, and would accord with Core Strategy Policy CP8 and the relevant Habitats Regulations requirements.

- 5.75 **Affordable Housing:** As the proposal seeks fewer than 5 dwellings, and is under 0.16 hectares in area, it is not liable for an affordable housing contribution.
- 5.76 **Community Infrastructure Levy:** The proposal is CIL liable based upon the level of floorspace created. The relevant forms have been submitted with the application.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Section 38(6) requires the application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Whilst the site lies outside the defined settlement boundary and therefore engages the restrictive spatial provisions of Policies CP9 and CC02, its actual relationship with the settlement is highly unusual: it immediately adjoins and is effectively enveloped by established residential development rather than projecting into otherwise undeveloped countryside.
- 6.2 Importantly, the proposal would preserve the underlying purposes of Policy CP11 by maintaining settlement identity and avoiding material harm to the character of the countryside.
- 6.3 The August 2026 NPPF provides substantial further support. The proposal benefits from three separate routes under Policy S5: it would contribute towards unmet housing need in a Borough with only a 2.5-year housing land supply under S5(1)(j)(i); it represents redevelopment of previously developed land under S5(1)(d); and it constitutes limited infilling within an established group of houses under S5(1)(e). In this context, Annex A is also material, with very limited weight to be given to those parts of older Development Plan policies which are materially inconsistent with the new national decision-making policies.
- 6.4 The detailed assessment identifies no material harm which would outweigh this strong policy support. The bungalow represents a restrained response to the plot and the varied character of Wick Hill Lane; neighbouring amenity would be safeguarded; appropriate parking and access are provided; the principal landscape structure would be retained and enhanced; and drainage, ecological mitigation

and Thames Basin Heaths SPA mitigation can all be satisfactorily addressed.

- 6.5 Overall, the proposal accords with Policy CP11 and receives direct support through three separate provisions of NPPF Policy S5. With the Council's substantial housing shortfall, the site's contained residential context and the effect of Annex A considered together, the planning balance favours the development. The adverse effects do not substantially outweigh the benefits and planning permission should therefore be granted.

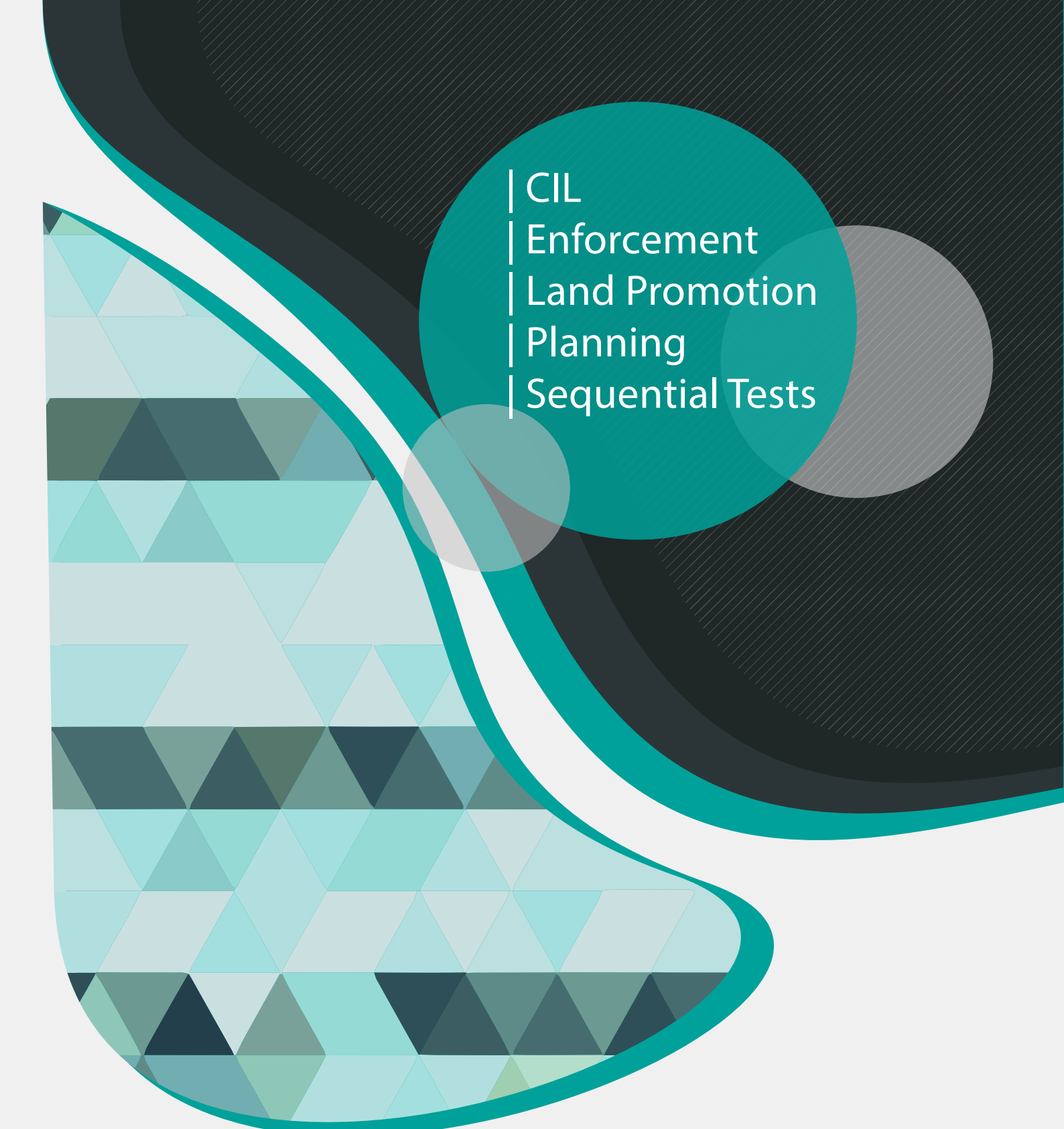
Matthew Miller BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Associate Director | ET Planning

Head Office: 200 Dukes Ride Crowthorne RG45 6DS

matthew.miller@etplanning.co.uk 01344 508048

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Contact

Address

200 Dukes Ride RG45 6DS

Phone

01344 508048
01865 507265
01483 363950
01743 612043
01392 691384

Web & Mail

Email: office@etplanning.co.uk
ET Planning Ltd | 10646740

Web: www.etplanning.co.uk