

21st July 2025

Wokingham Borough Council
Planning Services

Project //

Proposed double garage at:
Pool Court
Thames Street
Sonning-on-Thames
RG4 6UR

Dear Sir/Madam

Cover Letter & Heritage Statement - Proposed Double Garage at Pool Court, Thames Street, Sonning-on-Thames

Further to the online submission of a householder planning application made via the planning portal for the Council's formal consideration I confirm that, in addition to this covering letter and heritage statement, it comprises the following documents;

- Application Forms;
- Location Plan no 2504-P-L01
- Block Plan no 2504-P-L02
- Drawing no 2504-P-050 Proposed site/roof plan layout;
- Drawing no 2504-P-101 Proposed floor plans and elevations;
- As existing topographical survey;
- CIL questions form;
- Application Fee to the sum of £ 613.00.

Introduction

This application seeks householder planning permission for the erection of a new double garage within the curtilage of Pool Court, a residential property located within the Sonning-on-Thames Conservation Area.

The garage is intended to provide additional parking and storage in a manner appropriate to the scale and setting of the existing house. It will be accessed via the existing driveway which serves the main house.

Proposed Development and Design Justification

The proposed garage will be of traditional construction, comprising a timber frame set above a low brickwork plinth, under a pitched roof finished in clay tiles to match the local vernacular. The building will feature feather-edged cladding and traditionally detailed timber ledged and braced garage doors.

The siting and design of the garage have been carefully considered to ensure it reads as a subservient ancillary building. It will be positioned approximately 16 metres to the south of the main dwelling, between the site entrance and an existing outbuilding & tennis court to the west, and will be largely screened by mature planting and existing boundary vegetation. With a maximum ridge height of 4.7m and a restrained footprint, it has been designed to be both functional and sympathetic to its setting.

Given the site's location within a designated conservation area, particular attention has been paid to the use of materials, architectural detailing, and massing. The proposed design draws directly from local building traditions and is intended to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The new garage will make a positive, low-impact addition to the site, sitting subserviently and inconspicuously next to the existing house and within the wider landscape setting.



Site and Surroundings

The application site occupies a recessed position on the northern side of Thames Street, within the Sonning-on-Thames Conservation Area. It is accessed via a private driveway—within the applicant's ownership—which runs between Myrtle Cottage and 1 Elm Cottages and also serves two additional dwellings to the rear of the Thames Street frontage.



Aerial image of site

The existing dwelling, Pool Court, is a non-designated heritage asset designed by the architect Francis Pollen (1926–1987) and constructed in 1975. It is a single-storey building located at the northeastern corner of the plot, sited on higher ground to take advantage of westward views toward the River Thames. Despite its elevated position, the house is very well screened and only visible in glimpsed views from the river footpaths to the north-west.

The proposed garage will sit comfortably within the site, occupying a position to the front of the existing dwelling that does not interrupt any key public views toward Pool Court or beyond. Its traditional form, sympathetic materials, and discreet placement ensure that it will integrate unobtrusively into its surroundings.

Access and Parking

The proposed garage will be served by the existing private drive to Pool Court. No alterations are proposed to the existing access.



Landscape/Trees

No existing trees or hedges on the site will be affected by the proposed garage positioning, and it will be positioned wholly within an area of existing gravel driveway.

Heritage Statement

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the importance of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and their setting, and ensuring that development within conservation areas is sympathetic in form, material, and scale.

The application site lies within the Sonning-on-Thames Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset notable for its picturesque village setting, rich architectural history, and well-preserved rural character. The conservation area includes a concentration of listed buildings, many of them timber-framed or of mellow red brick, with clay tile roofs and traditional detailing. The area retains a distinctively linear grain along Thames Street, interspersed with lanes and footpaths, generous gardens, and mature planting that contribute to its semi-rural charm.

Pool Court occupies a discreet, recessed position to the north of Thames Street, well set back from the public realm and accessed via a private driveway. The house itself, while not listed, is considered a non-designated heritage asset due to its architectural provenance – designed by Francis Pollen in the 1970s – and its integration into the landscape. The property's elevated siting and mature landscaping contribute positively to the conservation area's layered character and verdant setting.

The proposed double garage is sited to the south of the main dwelling, in a location that is visually discrete and physically well-contained within the curtilage of the property. The new building will not interrupt key views from the public realm, nor will it compete with the architectural interest of the principal house. Existing planting, which is to be retained and enhanced, will further reduce visual impact.

The garage has been designed with reference to traditional outbuildings commonly found in historic rural villages. Its form—a simple pitched roof structure—along with the use of timber framing, a brick plinth, clay tile roof, and traditionally styled timber ledged and braced doors, reflects local building materials and vernacular traditions. The architectural language is appropriate in this context and ensures that the structure is read as a subservient, complementary addition rather than an intrusive one.

Importantly, the building's siting, massing, and materials have been developed to ensure the character and appearance of the conservation area is preserved, and in some respects, enhanced—by restoring a clear functional hierarchy to the plot and improving parking and access arrangements in a way that avoids encroachment near the principal dwelling.

Conclusion

The proposed development has been conceived with due regard to the historic and architectural significance of the Sonning-on-Thames Conservation Area. Through careful siting, traditional detailing, and a sensitive use of materials, the new garage will preserve the special interest of the area and respect its established character.



In line with both national and local policy, the proposal is considered to result in no harm to the significance of the conservation area or the setting of the non-designated heritage asset (Pool Court), and is therefore compliant with Section 72 of the Act and paragraphs 199-202 of the NPPF.

Given the above, it is hoped that the application will be supported. Should the allocated Case Officer have any queries or require further clarification, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours Sincerely

Dom Brooke-Read BA (Hons) Arch
Partner
On behalf of CODE Architects Ltd.