

Date: 01 December 2025
Application: 252676



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Pre-application Advice Response Letter

Application Number: 252676

Site Address: 205 Nine Mile Road, Wokingham, RG40 3QA

Expiry Date: 01 December 2025

Proposal: Pre-application advice for the proposed erection of 3 no. dwellings with associated accesses following demolition of the existing dwelling.

Dear Mr. Wicks,

Thank you for your request for planning advice which was validated on 3rd November 2025. This letter will provide advice about your project and what you may need to do when submitting a planning application.

At this stage, we have not consulted anyone else about your project, such as your neighbours, but we would do so if a planning application is submitted. Before you submit a planning application, we recommend that you discuss your project with your neighbours. Also, most applicants employ an agent to submit their planning application for them.

We have provided a [frequently asked questions page](#) to answer some of the common queries about planning which will help explain the planning application process.

Description of Proposal

This pre-application seeks advice for the proposed erection of 3 no. dwellings with associated accesses following demolition of the existing dwelling

The pre-application has been supported by a Design and Access Statement as well

as proposed plans, elevations and supporting reports.

Site and Surroundings

The application site is a detached house with off-street parking and a rear residential garden. The site is located along Nine Mile Road which is predominantly a residential area where the dwellings are generally of a similar design, scale and material palette.

Planning History

Previous planning applications can be important in understanding what might be acceptable on the site now. Any relevant applications are set out below:

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
40177	Outline Planning Permission for the erection of three dwellings	Approved
991305	Proposed Renewal of outline approval 96/63228/O for the erection of 3 dwellings	Approved
141121	Proposed Erection of "no. detached dwellings following demolition and removal of existing dwelling	Refused

Assessment of Project

Planning applications are considered against national and local planning policy. The policies most relevant to your project are listed below and you can read the policy documents here:

- [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#)
- [National Planning Policy Guidance \(NPPG\)](#)
- [Core Strategy, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan](#)
- [Borough Design Guide and Village Design Statements](#)

Assessment of Proposal & Key Issues

Principle of Development:

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the Development Plan consists of the Core Strategy (CS) 2010 and Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan

2014. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must also be considered as it constitutes guidance which the Local Planning Authority must pay regard to; however it does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making. However, the NPPF is a material consideration in any determination and must be read alongside the Development Plan.

Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map. The site is located within a major development location and as such the principle of development should be acceptable subject to other material considerations. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

Emerging Local Plan Update

The Local Plan Update (LPU), the plan which will supersede the adopted Core Strategy and MDD Local Plans, was submitted to the Secretary of State on 28th February 2025. Two Planning Inspectors have been appointed to undertake an independent examination, and a programme for the hearing sessions is due to commence on the 18th November 2025.

The application site has not been submitted for proposed allocation for residential development. Notwithstanding, given the stage of examination, with several stages in the process yet to be completed, the Proposed Submission Plan and relevant draft policies have moderate to limited weight in determining planning applications. Ahead of the submission of any application, these policies should be reviewed and considered as part of any formal submission.

Development Plan Summary

As set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and NPPF, the starting point for assessment is against the development plan. The proposal is within the built-up area of Finchampstead wherein the principle of development is acceptable subject to other material considerations as outlined below.

Housing Land Supply:

The Council can currently only demonstrate that it has 2.5 years' worth of deliverable sites, rather than a five-year supply as required by the NPPF. Subsequently, the Local Development Plan is considered out of date in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Paragraph 11 states that where policies which are most important for determining an application are out of date, permission should be granted unless:

- i. the application or policies in the Framework that protect assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development; 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

Firstly, in considering i), it must be recognised that the proposed development is within settlement limits and not within any protected areas or assets of particular importance (as outlined in footnote 7 of paragraph 11). Therefore, the proposal must be considered under ii) to determine whether there are any adverse impacts generated by the development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This is referred to as the 'tilted balance', as harms and benefits are not weighed equally, but tilted against any adverse impacts. The tilted balance required by paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF will be given in the 'Planning Balance and Conclusion' section of this response letter.

Sustainability:

Policies CP1, CP4, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the CS permit development where it is based on sustainable credentials in terms of access to local facilities and services and the promotion of sustainable transport.

In this instance, the site is located within settlement limits within a major development location and is acceptable in terms of the principles stated in the Core Strategy. It also accords with the relevant policies in the MDD Local Plan. The site is within a 5-10 minute walking distance from the nearest convenience store, and leisure facilities and is less than 100 metres from the nearest bus stop which serves Reading at half hourly intervals. On this basis, there are no sustainability concerns with the proposal.

Design and Character of the Area:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF (2023) notes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. R1 of the Borough Design Guide (SPD) requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the underlying character and quality of the area. R9 states that development should respond to the height of the surrounding local context, and R10 states that development should be reflective of local density. R11 states housing should be designed to create a street scene with a coherent character that relates well to the existing street scene.

Scale, Massing and Detailed Design:

The proposed dwellings would replace an existing detached bungalow and subdivide the existing residential plot into three dwellings with a shared access for the front two properties and a secondary access for the rear dwelling from Bank Side. The proposal is demonstrated as being of modern design and materials which would be a difference from the existing character of the area which is of more traditional materials. The application site has a larger plot than the surrounding properties in general, it would however as a result of the proposed development have a slightly reduced plot size

and overall scale when compared to the neighbouring plots within the immediate vicinity.

Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan require an appropriate dwelling density and R10 of the Borough Design Guide SPD seeks to ensure that a development achieve an appropriate density in relation to local character.

As indicated above, the proposal would replace the existing dwelling on site with a net of two new dwellings. It is anticipated that a rear detached bungalow of modest/similar scale could be suitably accommodated on this application site provided acceptable roof ridge heights are demonstrated in any subsequent formal planning application. This is because the character of the surrounding area is mixed with varying architectural styles and a suitable set-back from the roadside is provided to reflect the established building line of neighbouring properties. In terms of the rear bungalow proposed, there are some concerns with the modest amenity space and tree cover of the plot which may make the amenity space undesirable for occupants and be contrary to the design guidance for amenity space. This should be justified as part of any formal application.

In terms of the front two dwellings which are proposed to be semi-detached, this is somewhat contrary to the existing character of the area which is predominantly detached properties set back from the highway. It is acknowledged that the current bungalow is set at an angle to the streetscene which in of itself is out of keeping with the character wherein properties front the highway which is overcome by the current proposal. The semi-detached properties have been designed to front the highway which is positive and they do have the appearance of a large, detached property as set out within the supporting documents. Nonetheless, there are some concerns over the expanse and bulk of the front semi-detached properties across the plot width.

In plan form, the proposal would appear to provide adequate spacing between properties on the site in accordance with the BDG. The rear dwelling appear to maintain a separation distance of at least 1 metre from the flank wall to the boundary however the front two properties only allow for 0.5 metres. This again suggests that the scale, bulk and massing of the semi-detached properties are excessive for the size of the plot.

The proposed dwellings would be set closer to the neighbouring properties at No.203 and 207A Nine Mile Road, which may result in an overbearing relationship with the neighbouring properties which could seem overly oppressive at this stage. There are further concerns about the proposed arrangement and how this would work in practice on the site and if the dwellings would appear 'shoehorned' into the plot.

In terms of detailed design, the submitted details confirms that the proposed materials will be modern with white render, wood and metal cladding, brickwork and grey roof tiles. The images included within the supporting statement demonstrate the proposed overall appearance of the property does appear at odds with the more traditional appearance of the area. Nonetheless, it is not considered that the design in of itself would result in harm and a mixture of design within the area would not be detrimental to the character of the area. Overall, whilst different, the proposed dwellings would be

appropriate for, and respectful to, the character of the area.

The proposal would result in a density of one detached dwelling and two semi-detached dwellings within approximately 1,201 square metres of land equating to 25 Dwellings Per Hectare (DPH). Although plot sizes vary within the surrounding area, this would result in a higher density compared to the other detached properties in the local area which typically are within approximately 735 square metres of land with a single property within the plot. The development could therefore appear somewhat cramped. However, the semi-detached properties Nos. 1 - 10 Bank Side, which are in close proximity to the application site, sit on a total area of 3,500 square metres (circa 34 DPH) which is a greater density than the proposal. Therefore, the difference in density alone is unlikely to cause any substantial harm in this location.

The site appears to have reasonably good tree/foliage cover along the northern and southern boundary which would be a constraint upon the proposed development. It is not clear if these boundary features are in control of the applicant or not. In either case, these features should be retained and protected throughout the course of the planning process. Any loss of such features would need to be justified and unless exempt, form part of the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and site assessment.

Overall, there are some concerns that the proposal would be somewhat 'shoehorned' into the site, pressure the boundary features and result in a cramped development despite the above discussions. Therefore, it would be important as part of any formal application to demonstrate that there is sufficient space within the site for the proposed dwellings with appropriate levels of vehicle parking, cycle parking, the turning of vehicles within the site and bin storage, for example. At this stage, there are concerns that the development would result in the overdevelopment of the application site.

Development of a Residential Garden:

Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan seeks to avoid inappropriate development of residential gardens where there is harm to the local area. Permission would only be granted where there is a positive contribution to the built form and surrounding spaces, integration with the layout of the surrounding area, appropriate hard and soft landscaping, amenity space, building separation and compatibility with the general building height. Additionally, R16 of the Borough Design Guide states that new housing must provide easy access to some form of amenity space.

Assessment of the proposal against TB06 follows below:

- 2) a) i.) suitable separation distance between new dwellings and existing neighbours – has been demonstrated through the block plan and proposed site plan. There are some concerns with regards to overbearance with the neighbour to the east and west, this would need to be addressed as part of any formal application.
- ii.) building lines, rhythm of plot frontages – the proposal demonstrates that the building line will be similar to neighbouring properties, as will the provision of parking.
- iii.) openings and boundary treatments on site frontage – will need to be demonstrated on any subsequent application.

iv.) hard and soft landscaping – this has partially been demonstrated on the submitted proposed site plan, but it will need to be demonstrated further on any subsequent application.

v.) compatibility with building height in the area – the dwelling would appear to match the height of other dwellings in the local context.

vi.) the materials and elevation details are of similar quality – the proposed materials will be different to the existing dwelling and elevation details will need to be demonstrated on any subsequent application.

b) the application site is of adequate size – the original plot would be reduced, however as outlined above there are some concerns as to if this would result in the overdevelopment of the plot and if this would still be reasonable to accommodate the development in terms of setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for parking. There are some concerns at this time regarding a cramped appearance as a result of the proposed dwellings. This would need to be adequately demonstrated on any formal application that adequate space and appropriate provision is achievable on site.

c) access meets appropriate highway standards – the Council's highways officer has been consulted upon this pre-application and their comments are outlined below; however, the proposal would revise the existing access, the original access would need to be stopped up and this should be demonstrated on supporting plans. The secondary access off of Bank Side appears to be suitable for the proposal. The parking arrangements appear to be sufficient, however there are some concerns with the proposed parking layout and how this would operate and allow for turning on site for example. Again, this would need to be demonstrated as part of any formal application.

d) the proposal does not lead to unacceptable tandem development – the proposed development would result in adjacent rather than tandem development and as such would be appropriate for its location.

e) design and layout minimise exposure of private boundaries – the site layout ensures that private boundaries are away from public areas other than the front boundary.

From the Borough Design Guide, the Council's minimum garden length of 11 metres is a generally accepted guideline for private garden space, provided that the space is usable. This generally means that gardens should be roughly rectangular in shape, receive direct sunlight for some of the day, be capable of accommodating activities such as sitting, play, clothes drying, and they should also provide secure external access to the rear garden for cycle storage.

The proposal would feature both hard and soft landscaping and the rear garden would also be accessible via side gates. The proposed site plan demonstrates that the proposal would mostly comply with the requirements of the Borough Design Guide, with the only contentious points being that the garden depth of the rear dwelling which appears below the minimum garden length within the design guidance and that the boundary trees may reduce the amount of direct sunlight for some of the day within this garden area. The gardens areas for the front two properties are somewhat rectangular in shape and appear to look of sufficient size. The measurements on the supporting documentation demonstrate the length of the garden area which appear to be appropriate. The rear plot seems to be more of a contrived layout wherein garden areas are to the front and side rather than to the rear. It would need to be demonstrated that this would be appropriate and justified as part of any application. Overall, the proposal does appear somewhat cramped within the site and are perhaps too large

for the size of the plot albeit, the proposal themselves would not appear as incongruous additions to the urban setting of the site. Therefore, the proposal would make a neutral to slightly positive contribution to the street scene and the wider residential area in accordance with policy TB06.

Dwelling Mix:

Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy requires an appropriate mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes so that the housing needs of the community are met. Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan requires an appropriate housing mix which reflects a balance between the underlying character of the area and both the current and projected needs of households. The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (February 2016) identified future housing need for the Wokingham Borough with 66% of all new dwellings to be 3+ bedrooms.

Policy CP5 requires that all residential proposals of at least 5 dwellings or covering a net site area of at least 0.16 ha will provide 50% of the net additional units proposed as affordable dwellings where viable. In this case, the proposal would create a net increase of two three-four beds dwellings, which is reasonably appropriate in an area predominated by family sized three and four bed dwellings. Additionally, the site area is only 0.12 ha, the proposal is therefore acceptable in this regard.

Housing Amenity:

Internal Amenity:

Policy TB07 of the MDD and R17 of the SPD require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity. In accordance with the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard, a minimum standard of 93m² applies for a 2 storey, 3 bedroom, 5 person occupancy dwelling. The proposed dwellings would appear to have an internal floor space of in excess of 100m² which would exceed this minimum standard.

The proposed fenestration should allow sufficient daylight into all habitable rooms with the main outlooks being to the front and rear of the properties. Whilst a first floor plan has not been provided, it appears that the current level of internal amenity as proposed would be compliant with policy TB07 of the MDD Local Plan and would therefore be acceptable.

External Amenity:

R16 of the SPD requires a minimum depth of 11m for rear gardens and a 1m setback from the site boundary to allow access thereto. It should receive direct sunlight and be capable of accommodating play, clothes drying and storage. From the submitted proposed site plan the rear garden depths of the front dwellings appear to be appropriate; however, the rear bungalow does not appear to comply. Further details and justification would be required as part of any formal application.

Neighbour Amenity:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity and R23 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that extensions relate to neighbouring properties.

Overlooking: R15 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires the retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms, with separation of 22-30m to the rear and 10-15m to the street. R23 notes that the side walls must not contain windows, especially at first floor level. From assessing the submitted Block Plan, it is clear the front dwellings would comply with the rear separation distances, however the proposal appears to only be set back around 8 metres from the property frontage. Albeit the building line would replicate that of the neighbouring properties so wouldn't in of itself be out of keeping. Due to the placement and orientation of the site, there may be an element of mutual oblique overlooking into the rear gardens of the dwelling within the application plot, however, this would not differ substantially from many existing situations within suburban areas. As such, it is not considered this alone would result in a refusal of the application.

Overbearing and Sense of Enclosure: R16 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires separation distances of 1.0m to the boundary and 11m to the rear boundary. The proposal would not accord with the 1 metre requirements, albeit it would allow for access to the rear of the property for one of the semi-detached properties. Nor would the rear dwelling be 11m from the rear boundary which weighs against the proposal and further suggests an overdevelopment of the site.

Given the respective scale of the proposed dwellings and their placement within the site there may be some perceived overbearing impacts as a result of the proposed development. This would be reduced as a result of the rear plot being single storey. To further assist with reducing overbearing impacts, it would be expected that the ridge height would be reflective of other properties within the local context and/or width of the front dwellings reduced to move the massing from the boundary.

Sunlight and Daylight: R18 of the Borough Design Guide SPD aims to protect sunlight and daylight to existing properties, with no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties. Habitable windows of adjoining properties must not be obstructed by a 25 degree angle and two storey extensions must not obstruct a 45 degree line back towards a habitable window of the adjoining property. The supporting plans and documents suggest that the 45 degree rule would be respected.

Given the orientation of the site to the properties there would be no significant change to or loss of light impact on the properties on the boundary. The proposal may result in some further overshadowing to the gardens of the neighbouring properties especially as the proposal would increase the height of the dwellings on the plot. This would be further exacerbated as a result of the width and placement of the dwellings in close proximity to the site boundaries. It is unclear at this time if there are side facing windows within the neighbouring properties which may be impacted by the proposal, this should be clear on any submission and justified as to why this would not result in detrimental harms in this regard. At this time there are concerns given the additional massing and proximity to the boundary the proposal could result in harms.

Overall, however, it is considered that any potential impact on neighbouring amenity

in respect of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impact could likely be sufficiently mitigated, preventing any adverse harm as a result of the development or the design revised to achieve this. Although this would need to be demonstrate as part of any formal application.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street parking standards, including provision for charging facilities.

P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that parking spaces are to be a minimum of 5m x 2.5m. P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that parking spaces should be safe and convenient, close to the dwelling and sited to minimise impact upon safety. The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal and raised no concern with the proposed parking provision.

In line with Policy CC07 and future trends, it is recommended that one electric charging point be included within an unallocated car space and designed so that it is incorporated within the design of the building.

Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum cycle parking standards and Policies P2 and P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD ensure that it is conveniently located, secure and undercover and provided where it is compatible in the street scene. The proposed position of the cycle parking provision would need to be demonstrated upon the supporting plans and will need to be reconsidered alongside a full submission.

The existing site access would be replaced with a single central access point with parking provided on the frontage for the two semi-detached properties. A further access for the rear plot would be provided from a new access off of Bank Side. The parking shown on the block plan demonstrate at least two parking spaces per dwelling. At this time there are some concerns that the parking arrangements at the site and how this would be managed with interactions between vehicle parking and site access. Further, on site turning should also be provided to demonstrate a vehicle car turn on site and leave in a forward facing gear.

The proposal has been reviewed by the Highways Officer who have provided the following comments:

"General

The applicant will propose to demolish the existing dwelling and erect three new dwellings. The existing site access onto Nine Mile Ride will be retained for the two front plots. A new shared drive onto Bank Side will be proposed for the rear plot.

Insufficient details of the proposed dwellings can be identified from the submission. The applicant will be expected to provide the parking plans and floor plans of all dwellings in the formal planning application.

The traffic generated from three dwellings will unlikely have significant impacts on the wider highway network.

As the site is currently functioned as general amenity area to the existing house, Highways will have no objection on site sustainability for the proposal.

Access

Independent access to parking will be required for all independent residential properties. If independent access cannot be provided, the new dwellings will have to be ancillary to the main dwelling and shall not be sold, leased or disposed of separately.

Insufficient details of the proposed dwelling and access arrangements have been provided for the Highways to assess if independent access can be provided, particularly for House Type A.

Existing Access onto Nine Mile Ride

As the existing access onto Nine Mile Ride will be used as a shared access for two dwellings, a minimum driveway width of 4.1m will be required to accommodate two-way traffic.

The applicant will propose to relocate the access westward. Subject to the proposed arrangement, the applicant shall confirm that the existing sightlines can be retained and shall be across land within the applicant's control or highway land and shall be clear of obstructions to visibility exceeding 0.6m in height.

Separate consent will be required from the Traffic Management team for relocating the existing dropped crossing.

Subject to the proposed parking arrangement, the applicant will be expected to submit the swept path analysis with large saloon car for the first 10m of access road to demonstrate vehicle can enter and leave the driveway in forward gear.

New Access onto Bank Side

Bank Side is an adopted unclassified cul-de-sac with a turning head at the end of the carriageway. The applicant proposes to convert part of the existing tarmac to part of the private drive, which will have encroached the existing public highway.

A stopping up order by DfT is required to remove highway rights to permanently close or divert a highway. Prior to a separate approval for stopping up the public highway, the applicant is advised to liaise with the council's Highway Assets, Property and Legal teams.

The recommended maximum width of dropped crossing by the Traffic Management team is 3.6m. Separate consent will be required from the TM team for the proposed width and location of the new dropped crossing.

Insufficient details of the proposed access arrangement have been provided. Subject to the proposed access arrangement, the existing service margin might be affected. According to the WBC's Highways Design Guide, the recommended service margin shall be 2m wide where development is proposed, and 1m wide where street lighting is presence.

Should discussion of stopping up the public highway be successful with the council's Highway Assets, Property and Legal teams, the applicant will be required to demonstrate all services can be accommodated within the proposed width of service margin, and no existing/proposed service to be located under the carriageway.

The applicant will also be expected to clearly indicate the proposed position of the street lighting column in the proposed site plan. Separate consent from the council's Streetworks and Asset Management teams will be required if relocation of street lighting column will be involved.

Parking

The applicant will be expected to assess on the sufficiency of proposed parking in the formal submission and indicate the proposed provisions on a plan.

While there are insufficient details to identify the proposed parking provisions and numbers of habitable rooms of the proposed dwellings, according to the WBC Car Parking Standards, the development in Village location will generally require two to three driveway parking for each dwelling within the red line boundary. An additional visitor parking space will be required among the proposed dwellings. Each parking space shall have minimum dimensions of 5.0m x 2.5m.

If garage will be proposed, the minimum sizes of a single garage for parking are 6m x 3m.

As the access road will be shared among the front plots, the shared drive shall always be kept clear from obstruction and parking.

Cycle Parking

According to the WBC Parking Standards, one cycle parking allocation will be required per dwelling for three or less habitable rooms, two will be required for dwelling with 4-5 habitable rooms and three will be required for dwelling with 6+ habitable rooms.

The applicant shall indicate direct access to the rear garden, cycle store or garage of suitable sizes for cycle storage on the plan. If the garages will be used to accommodate both the cars and cycles, the sizes of each garage space shall be increased to 7m x 3m.

EV Charging Points

Each new dwelling will be expected to provide a minimum of one EV Charging Point under the latest Building Regulations (Approved Document S). This shall be marked on the plan in formal submission,

Refuse Collection Arrangement

According to Manual for Streets, the bin collection point shall not be placed exceeding the maximum carrying distances for households (30m) and refuse collection operators (25m) from the public highways. Such standards will apply to all plots within the site.

Kerbside collection will likely be suitable for all plots for the proposed access arrangement."

Landscaping and Trees:

Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character. The pre-application has been reviewed by the Landscape Officer who has provided the following comments:

“The site is located along Nine Mile Ride, a Green Route as per the development plan. The site boundary to the north overlaps 412a Finchampstead Road, where much of the proposed development is sited, and where there are trees protected by TPO 1278/2008; T5 and T6 Oak (on TPO and Proposed Block Plan), and on the opposite (east boundary) a group G2 of 4No. Scots Pine which are not included on the plan.

The application is for 3 dwellings; a pair of semi-detached facing Nine Mile Ride and a single large dwelling to the rear following demolition of the existing bungalow. There is a 1.2m (est.) high wall at the end of Bank Side Road separating it from the site, and a clear view of the existing bungalow on site and its setting.

Bank Side Road to the east of the site is a short cul de sac with single storey bungalows like the existing dwelling on the site. The proposals state this road will provide access to the rear of the site where a 4 bed detached two storey dwelling is located. However, the access is not clearly shown on the ‘Proposed Block Plan’, so there is no clue as to how it would work with the site layout either practically with the dwellings along Bank Side Road or visually when compared to the existing view from Bank Side Road to the site which currently provides permeability despite the single storey bungalow, and a great sense of the landscape setting. With development that view may deteriorate the setting which will provide an end stop to that view and a greater sense of urbanisation.

The building line of Bank Side Road bungalows and the large footprint proposed to the rear of the application plot can only be partially judged with the drawings provided although the corner of No.1a building meets that of the proposed bungalow. Regarding to the proposed dwellings to the front of the site the rear wall extends way past the rear building line of No. 207 Nine Mile Ride. This building unit is substantially larger than anything in the immediate vicinity where the dwellings are mostly detached rather than semi detached – with the large extension to the rear which is out of character with the general pattern of development.

The site is heavily influenced by the setting which is consistent with the high quality M1 character area;

An elevated plateau characterised by its densely wooded context, which creates a strong sense of enclosure. The woodland is varied with semi-natural areas and forestry plantation interspersed with heathland. Low density settlement is arranged along linear rides or in the settlements of Finchampstead (north) and part of Crowthorne. Away from areas of settlement, the landscape has a remote character, although it is still accessible due to numerous footpaths.

Nine Mile Ride is a Green Route and a non-designated heritage asset that is included in the Forest and Rides Valued landscape. The rides are heavily characterised by trees, not just to the front of the site but to the rear which is consistent along much of the route and frames the dwellings in views from the road. We need to understand how the site proposals will contribute to the enhancement of the Green Route how the development would relate to the wider landscape context which would be best served by submitting a Landscape Strategy as part of a full planning application.

The proposals raise questions regarding potential tree loss, land ownership, dense plot layout

As part of a full application an Arboricultural Implications Assessment to BS5837:2012 is required in accordance with Policy CC03/2d of the Local Plan. Tree protection may be required as a condition of planning permission. Hard and soft landscape proposals which include SUDs will be required as a condition of planning permission.”

At this time, as was set out within the Landscape Comments and previously within this response, there are some concerns regarding the design and density of the development, especially given the tree and landscape constraints of the site.

Ecology:

Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.

In line with the NPPF and Policy TB23, ecological enhancements such as bird and bat boxes or native wildlife planting should be considered at the earliest stages of the project.

Following the introduction of ‘Biodiversity Net Gain’, major developments (from November 2023) and minor developments (from April 2024) must demonstrate how the development will increase biodiversity by a minimum of 10%. After 1st April 2024, a form of Ecological Statement would need to be submitted which demonstrates how the development will increase biodiversity by a minimum of 10%. Further guidance for developers can be found on the Government’s website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain>.

The pre-application has been supported by an Ecology Survey Report which sets out the likely presence of bat were from “a low-level summer transient roost for BLE bats”. As such and as concluded within the supporting report, the proposed work (demolishing the bungalow) will lead to the destruction of non-breeding day roost of an individual BLE bat and, if unsupervised, bats may be killed resulting in a major negative impact at a local level. Given this, mitigation and compensation measures would be required as part of any formal application.

Waste Storage:

Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan requires adequate internal and external storage for the segregation of waste and recycling as well as provision for green waste and

composting and an appropriate area for ease of collection. This will need to be demonstrated on the site/block plan when submitting a planning application.

Flooding and Drainage:

Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding and policy CC10 requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow.

The site and access thereto is located within Flood Zone 1 and the proposal represents only a minor additional flood risk through loss of permeable ground. Given the topography of the site the proposal should set out if any works are required to avoid an increased risk of surface water flooding would be mitigated as part of the proposal. Given the limited loss of permeable ground, the proposal is likely to be found as acceptable in terms of Policy CC09. However, any formal submission should explore this and provide relevant information or mitigation as required.

Policy CC10 of the MDD Local Plan requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow. Details on the drainage system for the proposed dwelling could be submitted in support of a planning application to demonstrate compliance with Policy CC10 and prevent the need for a pre-commencement condition.

R23 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that parking spaces in front gardens must be paved with permeable surfaces to avoid any increase in surface water run-off and should include for soft landscaping. This would likely be applied by condition.

The drainage officer has been consulted on the pre-application and provided the following comments:

“The 1,489m² brownfield site is within flood zone 1 but in an area that experiences surface water flooding as well as high groundwater levels (up to 0.025m bgl).

The supporting design and access statement Rev A1 dated 08/10/2025 mentions that a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) approach has been adopted, with driveways and parking areas of permeable surfacing, to encourage infiltration.

Given that the site experiences surface water flooding and has high groundwater levels, we would anticipate seeing a drainage strategy report that addresses the following:

- 1) Calculations indicating the existing runoff rate from the site.*
- 2) BRE 365 test results demonstrating whether infiltration is achievable or not.*
- 3) Use of SuDS following the SuDS hierarchy, preferably infiltration.*
- 4) Full calculations demonstrating the performance of soakaways or capacity of attenuation features to cater for 1 in 100-year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change and runoff controlled at Greenfield rates, or preferably better.*
- 5) If connection to an existing surface water sewer is proposed, we need to understand why other methods of the SuDS hierarchy cannot be implemented and see confirmation from the utilities supplier that their system has got capacity and the*

connection is acceptable.

6) A demonstration of how surface water runoff is going to be catered for, given that parts of the development site already suffer from surface water flooding.

7) A description of how the proposed development will deal with surface water overland flows.

8) Groundwater monitoring confirming seasonal high groundwater levels in the area.

9) A drainage strategy plan indicating the location and sizing of SuDS features, with the base of any SuDS features located at least 1m above the seasonal high water table level.

10) Details demonstrating how any SuDS for this development would be managed throughout the lifespan of the development and who will be responsible for maintenance.

This is to prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF (2024) Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10."

Planning Balance and Summary:

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out that achieving sustainable development means that development should satisfy three overarching objectives in relation to economic, social and environmental benefits.

Economically the proposed development would enable job creation during the construction period, although this would be very limited given the scale of the development. The inhabitants of the proposed dwelling would also contribute to the local economy. This would likely hold limited weight in the tilted balance.

Regarding the **social** role, the provision of additional family homes within settlement would likely hold limited weight in the tilted balance given that only two additional dwellings are being provided on the site. However, it is recognised that the proposal would provide an additional dwelling at a time where the Local Authority cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply position.

Regarding the **environmental** role, more information on sustainability, landscaping and biodiversity measures would need to be submitted with any planning application, however due to the site's location within settlement and the scale of the proposal it is unlikely that there would be an adverse environmental impact and there is scope to mitigate and impact e.g. through enhanced soft landscaping. This would likely hold limited weight in the tilted balance.

Summary

In summary, the proposal would be acceptable in principle. Subject to acceptable elevation and floor plans, a reduced footprint and further details on appearance and landscaping, the proposal would likely have an acceptable impact on the character of the area despite the concerns around the proposal forming a somewhat cramped form of development. There are also some concerns regarding the impacts of the development upon the neighbouring properties as well as the extent of the built form

across the front of the plot these again could be reduced by a reduction in width and mass of the front dwellings. Subject to these details being justified and included along with the additional information as outlined above in the submission of a full planning application, the scheme is considered likely to accord with national and local policy and therefore would be acceptable in principle.

Submitting a Planning Application

Once you are ready to apply, please submit an application through the [Planning Portal](#). Specific documents are set out in the appendices below but refer to the Local Validation List available on the council's [how to apply for planning permission page](#) to assist you with ensuring the plans and documents submitted meet our validation requirements.

Other Guidance

Your development may also require Building Regulation approval to ensure it is built to national safety, design, and environmental standards. The Council's Local Authority Building Control (LABC) service offers a full range of plan approval, inspection, and associated services through an ISO9001 nationally accredited team of qualified building surveyors. These surveyors work closely with the Council's planning department to ensure the appropriate construction of your build. To find out more visit the Council's [Building Control website](#) or call 0300 790 0580 to speak to a member of the team.

If your project requires a dropped kerb on the road in front of your house then you may require consent from the highway authority; further information is available on the Council's [dropped kerbs page](#). Finally, if your project includes 100 sqm or more of new floor area then it is liable for the community infrastructure levy. Refer to the Council's [CIL page](#) for more information.

This concludes the pre-application process, and I trust that this informal advice is of use to you. Please be aware that it is given without prejudice to any future decision that the Council may take. If you would like further advice, then a new pre-application submission and associated fee will be required.

Yours sincerely,

Phillip Richards

Principal Planning Officer

Authorised by: