

HERITAGE STATEMENT
(INCLUDING ARBORICULTURAL METHOD STATEMENT)

Site Address: No. 8 Murdoch Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 2DE

Proposal: Construction of a detached single-storey outbuilding for ancillary domestic use (games room, golf simulator, and gym).

1. Introduction and Context

This statement supports a planning application for a detached garden outbuilding at **No. 8 Murdoch Road**. The application site sits within the **Murdoch Road Conservation Area**, designated by **Wokingham Borough Council**. The host property is a substantial **Victorian detached residence** featuring a long, deep rear garden typical of the spatial layout of this historic neighbourhood.

2. Significance of the Heritage Asset

As highlighted in the **Murdoch Road Area Townscape Appraisal**, the significance of the Conservation Area stems from its representation of Wokingham's late 19th and early 20th-century expansion. The area is celebrated for:

- **Architectural Individuality:** Distinctive residential designs, of the Edwardian and late Victorian era, many historically linked to the prominent local architectural firm Morris & Son.
- **Spatial Rhythm:** Large properties set within substantial plots with mature landscaping, garden boundary trees, and generous spacing between buildings.
- **Streetscape Integrity:** Intact historic frontages, while deep rear gardens offer a private, verdant buffer zone that does not directly influence public townscape views.

3. Principles and Justification of Proposed Works

The proposed building measures **16.95m x 4.5m** (approx. 74m² footprint). It will function as a domestic outbuilding strictly ancillary to the enjoyment of the main house, accommodating a games room, home gym, and golf simulator.

The design carefully breaks up its architectural massing to fulfill the user's technical requirements while remaining sensitive to neighbouring plots:

- **The main building body** incorporates a contemporary, low-profile **flat roof with a height of 2.85m** to minimize physical volume.

- **The central core** accommodates the golf simulator via a **4m wide pitched roof section with a ridge height of 4m**, strictly confined to the middle of the structure to contain the vertical footprint.
- **Siting parameters** place the structure 1m from the rear and eastern side boundaries, and 3.5m from the western side boundary, creating a maximum separation distance from all adjacent properties, as can be seen from the attached map of the 'Murdoch Road Conservation Area'.

4. Materiality, Landscaping, and Visual Impact Analysis

The outbuilding will be clad in high-quality **timber-effect cladding**. This material palette is deliberately selected to mirror the natural tones of the surrounding garden boundaries and mature landscaping.

The application site benefits from established planting along the boundary lines, including a mature **Rhododendron** on-site, as well as a **Holly tree, three Beech trees, and an Acacia tree** located immediately within the adjacent neighbouring property. These mature specimens act as a substantial, organic visual screen. Because the outbuilding is located at the absolute terminus of a deep rear garden, it will be entirely hidden from public views along Murdoch Road, ensuring the preservation of the primary streetscape. The low eaves height of 2.85m along the boundary lines, coupled with the dense tree canopy, prevents it from appearing overly dominant or intrusive to adjoining residential plots.

5. Arboricultural Impact and Root Protection Summary

Due to the close proximity of the proposed structure to the rear and side boundaries (within 1m), careful consideration has been given to the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of both the on-site Rhododendron and the neighbouring trees (Holly, Acacia, and three Beech trees).

To ensure the long-term health and preservation of these important landscape assets, the following construction methodology will be used:

- **No-Dig Foundation Design:** The structure will be built upon an **above-ground, engineered reinforced concrete raft slab**.
- **Zero Sub-Surface Excavation:** This slab will sit on top of the existing ground level, completely avoiding traditional deep strip-trenching or foundation digging.
- **Root Protection:** By utilizing a no-dig methodology, the critical radial roots of the neighbouring trees crossing under the boundary line will remain completely undisturbed and unsevered, eliminating any risk of physiological damage to the off-site trees.

6. Impact on the Setting of Listed Buildings

A review of national data from **Historic England** confirms that No. 8 Murdoch Road does not share an immediate property boundary with statistically listed structures. The development will have no impact on the setting or historical value of any statutory listed assets within the wider area.

7. Conclusion

The proposed garden room conforms to local heritage expectations. By utilizing a low-profile flat roof profile combined with a localized central pitch, the building limits its bulk. The retention and structural safeguarding of the existing **Beech trees, Acacia, Holly, and Rhododendron** via an above-ground, no-dig foundation ensures the leafy, verdant character of the **Murdoch Road Conservation Area** is fully maintained while causing zero harm to the architectural character or significance of the primary Victorian house.