

4 December 2025

Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1BN

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Full application for proposed erection of a garage/storage facility, following the demolition of existing garage/storage facility at Land Adjacent to Woodlands, Wick Hill Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3PZ.

I am pleased to provide a supporting Planning Letter for the above application, Council planning reference 252521.

Site Location and Description

The application site comprises an irregular shaped parcel of land situated immediately adjacent to "Woodlands", towards the eastern side of Wick Hill Lane, within Finchampstead. The site is located alongside a row of linear, semi-detached homes to the north on Nine Mile Ride, while the remainder of the surroundings predominately follow a pattern of detached dwellings set within mature landscaped plots. The surrounding context is predominately residential.

Currently, the land is characterised by an existing garage/storage facility, which is not connected to Woodlands in terms of ownership or use. However the use has nonetheless been for residential storage purposes connected to the applicant.

At present some building materials have been dumped on site by third parties (fly tipping), and such materials are not part of the submission.

Planning History

There is no separate Planning History for the site to that of Woodlands.

Relevant Constraints

Countryside

The site is located within the countryside, immediately adjoining defined settlement.

Flood zone

The site is located in flood zone 1.

Principle of development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a relevant material consideration to the application.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states that "Local planning authorities should approach decision on proposed development in a positive and creative way" and "at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible". Paragraph 124 of the NPPF comments that planning should "promote an effective use of land" in "meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions".

In this instance, the relevant development plan documents are:

- Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy (2010)

The site is located in the countryside, therefore, policy CP11 applies. It states that developments outside of development limits or within the countryside will not be permitted unless certain exceptions are applicable. One of such relevant exceptions is mentioned in CP11 5(ii), stating development is acceptable if it does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form, or footprint of the original building. As shown in the plans, the new building will only slightly increase in size compared to the original, demolished building. Therefore, the proposal would wholly comply with Policy CP11.

No change of use of land is sought as part of the proposal. The existing building has been in use by the applicant and his family since the 1950s, and has remained as a residential store following the land ownership change to the property of Woodlands itself.

Specifically, this storage has involved vehicles (as a garage), building materials, and household furniture. External storage has not been undertaken by the applicant, though it is understood that as a temporary arrangement the owner of Woodlands was permitted to use the site for storage of materials as part of their replacement dwelling, which has ceased since its completion.

Essentially the existing development is the equivalent of an off-site garage, and would remain as such as part of the proposal. It would be proposed solely for use by the applicant.

The purpose of the proposal is therefore to replace the degrading existing building, which is becoming no longer fit for purpose due to its age and quality of original construction.

Character, Appearance and Landscaping

Policy CP3 sets out that approval will be granted for proposals that are of appropriate scale, mass, height and character. The proposal is similar in scale to the existing building, occupying similar footprint and having the same siting as existing. It would have a taller maximum height through the proposed dual-pitched roof, which is required in order to meet modern construction standards for a building of its footprint.

The existing building is not considered to have architectural or design value, and this is particularly highlighted by the use of timber cladding and asbestos sheeting and concrete to its roof, which provides the appearance of a pre-fabricated and low value structure. The proposal would provide, by comparison, a modernised structure that would better integrate into the streetscene, particularly in the context of Woodlands.

The proposal would also enable additional soft landscaping works to be provided, following the aforementioned fly tipping, as well as removal of boundary planting following the change in ownership of Woodlands.

Residential Amenity

As the proposal would be similar in overall scale to the existing building, it would not result in any material impacts to neighbouring residents.

Transport Implications

The proposal would remain as use for residential purposes, and as a consequence there is not expected to be any change to the current level of transport movements.

Ecology

As the proposal involves the demolition of a building a Bat Survey has been provided with the submission. This survey confirms the existing building is highly unlikely to contain roosting bats, in view of its prefabricated roof and cladding.

The proposal is not BNG liable due to the additional built form proposed being less than 25 square metres.

Other Matters

The site is located in Flood Zone One, and does not require the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment.

There are no trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order, either on or immediately adjoining the property.

I trust the above is of assistance and assist with the positive determination of the application.

Yours Faithfully,

Matthew Miller BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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