

PLANNING STATEMENT

In support of

Full Planning Application

by Mr Thomas Roberts

Proposed residential development – Park Home Extension.

Demolition of the existing dwelling and use of land as an extension to Victoria Gardens Residential Park Home Estate, with the stationing of 35 park homes and the construction of a community building and park office.

31, Barkham Ride, Finchampstead,
Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 4EX

Prepared by

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1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 I am instructed by Mr Thomas Roberts, of A1 Roberts Properties Limited, to advise and prepare a full planning application for the proposed residential redevelopment of land at 31, Barkham Ride comprising new park homes. This application follows the grant of outline planning permission for 26 houses under planning permission 230791, as granted on 25th September 2024. Following careful consideration this is now the applicant's preferred development approach, that would allow for an extension to Victoria Gardens, his existing park home development. There has been a strong demand for the park homes which people find convenient in allowing downsizing from family homes.
- 1.2 I am familiar with the site and its planning history. I understand government planning policy within the recently published version of the National Planning Policy Framework and the development plan for the site. The development plan comprises the Wokingham Core Strategy (Adopted 2010) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Adopted 2014), as well as Supplementary Planning documents.
- 1.3 I have collaborated closely with the applicant and the architects for this site, Paul Edwards, as well as with tree consultants, an ecologist, drainage consultants, a landscape consultant, and a transport consultant.
- 1.4 The application is made in full. The following is proposed:

Demolition of the existing dwelling and use of land as an extension to Victoria Gardens Residential Park Home Estate, with the stationing of 35 park homes and the construction of a community building and park office.
- 1.5 This statement sets out the policy framework relevant to the revised proposal and a reasoned justification for the grant of outline planning permission.

1.6 The following documents are submitted in support of this application:

- Drawing No 2680 06 Rev A Site Location Plan and Proposed Site Plan.
- Drawing No 2680 05 Community and office building – plans and elevations.
- Drawing 5004 of park home “Image” 2DB Elevations
- Drawing 5004 of park home “Image” 2DB Floor Plan.
- Drawing 9009 of park home “Heritage” 2DB Elevations
- Drawing 9009 of park home “Heritage” 2DB Floor Plan.
- Drawing 9404 of park home “Ikon” 2DB Elevations
- Drawing 9404 of park home “Ikon” 2DB Floor Plan.

- Design and Access Statement prepared by Paul Edwards Architecture, dated December 2024.
- Arboriculture Report including tree survey, impact assessment and method statement, prepared by Mark Welby
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Land Strategy prepared by Draffin Associates.
- Planning Statement - this document.
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment, Preliminary Roost Assessment and Newt survey, prepared by Plan Ecology Ltd.
- Biodiversity Net Gain – Technical Note prepared by AA Environmental Ltd and Biodiversity Metric.
- Arboriculture Report prepared by Mark Welby Arboriculture Consultant, dated 10/12/2024.
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy prepared by Lanmor Consulting.
- Transport Report prepared by David McMurtary of Motion. Including road safety audit.
- Energy and Sustainability Statement prepared by Forum Energy Consultants.
- Community Infrastructure Levy Form.

2.0 The Application Site and Surrounding Area:

2.1 31 Barkham Ride is located on the north east side of Barkham Ride to the south of Barkham and close to the north western edge of Finchampstead. The property is located close to but outside the settlement boundary in a countryside location. It is next to Rook's Nest Wood Country Park, a local SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) with an area of 18.4 hectares.

An existing mobile home park estate known as Victoria Gardens comprises the eastern part of 31 Barkham Ride:

2.2 A residential property known as 33 Barkham Ride is located to the east of the site and adjoins the established settlement of Finchampstead. This is currently the subject of an application for residential development for 68 units, under reference **223528**. Members of the Planning Committee held on 13th March 2024 resolved to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a legal agreement.

Please refer to the architects design and access statement for further details of the site and surrounding area.

2.3 A copy of the site location plan is shown below with the application site edged in red:



2.4 The property owned by the applicant extends to approximately 1.501 hectares, all contained within a fenced area with landscaped boundaries. The property includes the following:

- Main dwelling and residential curtilage.
- Access to the highway.

- An extended open amenity area relating to the established mobile home park.

2.5 Access to the site is from Barkham Ride, the road that runs along the southern site boundary. The site has good access to local services and facilities in Finchampstead and is accessible via public transport, with regular bus links to Wokingham and Reading.

2.6 The site is within the Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zone 5 and 7km. This is where protection is afforded to a network of heathlands designated for their internationally important bird populations of Dartford Warbler, Nightjar and Woodlark.

2.7 The site is within the north western edge of Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment Area M1 'Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands'. Below is the summary of the whole area:

SUMMARY

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.

The eastern boundary of this area is defined by the borough boundary, although the character area extends into Bracknell Forest District. The northern and western boundaries broadly follow the edge of the woodland or settlement and changes in the underlying geology, from sands to clay and river terrace deposits. To the south the boundary is defined by the transition to the more open and topographically varied character of M2: Finchampstead Ridges Forested and Settled Sands and N2: Finchampstead Pastoral Sandy Lowland.

2.8 The application site is part of a site promoted through the Council's call for sites process. 31 and 33 Barkham Ride together are identified with reference ADH1. This site is proposed to be allocated as a residential site for 66 units in the emerging Local Plan.

2.9 The site is also allocated as a housing site within the adopted Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2038 (5F1003 31/33 Barkham Ride).

3.0 Planning History:

3.1 The following sets out the relevant planning history for the site taken from the council's website:

- 021635 Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings.
Erection of one replacement dwelling.
Approved 15/07/2002.

- Various Lawful Development Certificates and Planning Permissions relating to the adjoining mobile home park that now contains 26 units. *Note that these include the redevelopment of both a commercial and a residential building to allow extensions to the park.*

- 230791 Outline application for the proposed erection of 26 no. dwellings following demolition of the existing dwelling and garage. (All matters reserved except for access)
Approved 25/09/2024

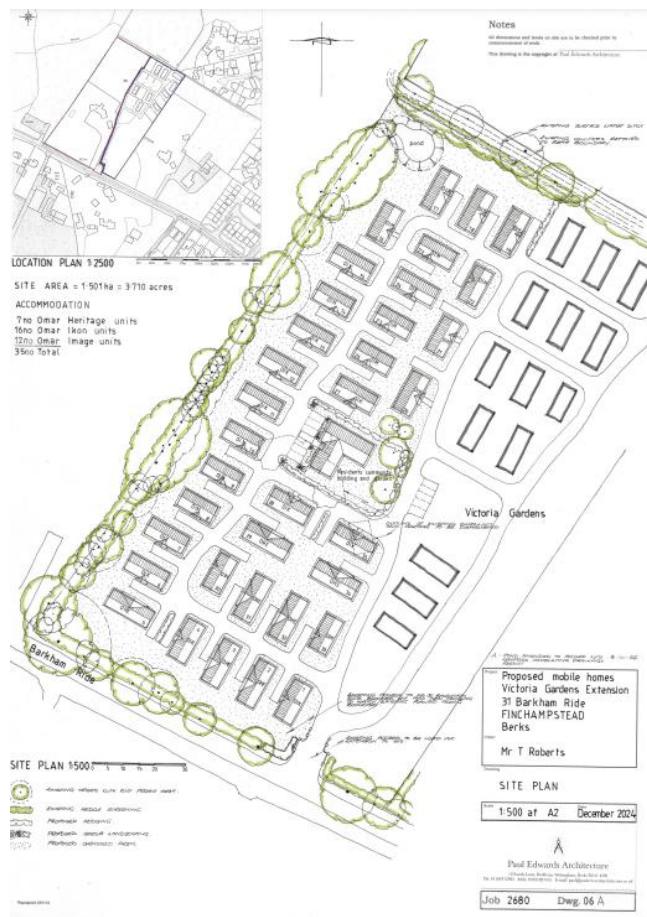
4.0 Proposed Development

4.1 The following development is proposed:

Demolition of the existing dwelling and use of land as an extension to Victoria Gardens Residential Park Home Estate, with the stationing of 35 park homes and the construction of a community building and park office.

4.2 Full planning permission is sought for the stationing of 35 park homes and the construction of a community and office building. A snip of the proposed layout is shown below. This has been designed to ensure no closer boundary relationship than the layout submitted as part of the outline planning permission.

The layout utilises the existing Victoria Gardens estate access from Barkham Rid



4.3 The site layout is designed as an extension to the existing park, to meet the mobile home site license requirements. The schedule of accommodation is shown below:

35 No mobile homes:

7 No Omar Heritage Units	15.344m x 6.116m – 93.84m ²
	2 bed 4 person unit (total 28 bedspaces)
16 No Omar Ikon Units	13.82m x 6.117m – 84.54m ²
	2 bed 4 person unit (total 64 bedspaces)
12 No Omar Image Units	12.266m x 6.117m – 75.03m ²
	2 bed 4 person unit (total 48 bedspaces)

35 x 2 bed, 4 person mobile homes = 140 bed spaces

Combined residential floor area = 2,909.88m²

4.4 *This compares with the approved indicative outline layout comprising 26 dwellings at 144 bedspaces, taking account of the Nationally Described Space Standard. The comparative calculation is below:*

26 Units:

5 x 4bed units @168m²- 8 bedspaces (min standard 124m²) = 40 bedspaces

5 x 4bed units @134m² - 8 bedspaces (min standard 124m²)= 40 bedspaces

6 x 3bed units @ 92m² - 4 bedspaces (min standard 84m²) = 24 bedspaces

1 x 4bed unit @134m² - 8 bedspaces (min standard 124m²)= 8 bedspaces

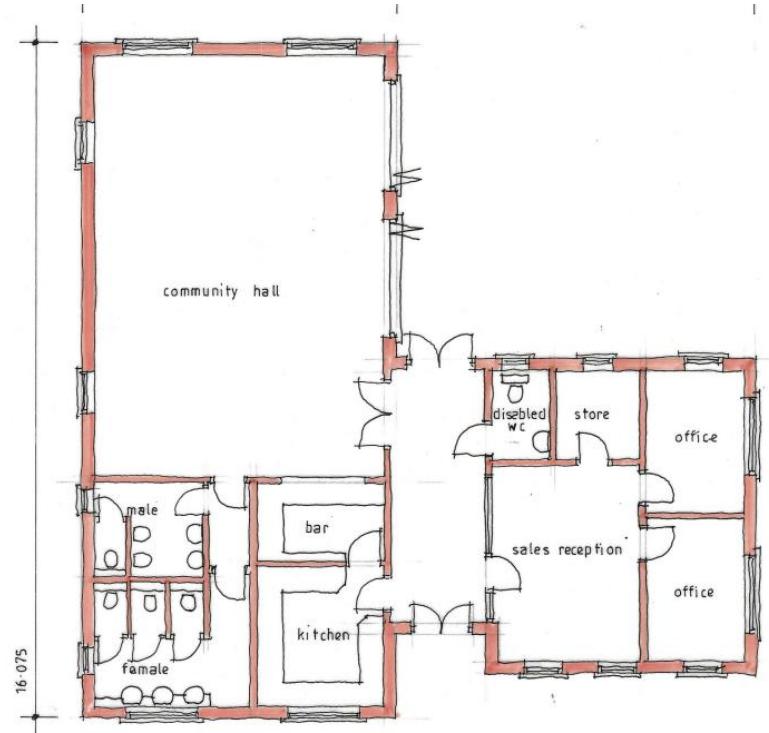
5 x 3bed units @ 92m² - 4 bedspaces (min standard 84m²) = 20 bedspaces

4 x 2bed units @ 73m² - 3 bedspaces (min standard 70m²) = 12 bedspaces

Total 144 bedspaces

Combined residential floor area = 2,948m²

4.5 A community and office building is proposed to serve the extended mobile home park, with a floor area of 163m². An extract from the drawing is shown below:



FRONT ELEVATION

- 4.6 All proposed mobile park homes are designed and built to meet the definition of a mobile home, to the required BS 3632 standard and also to site license requirements. All those proposed would exceed the Nationally Described Space Standard of 70m² for a 2 bedroom, 4 person single storey dwelling, should this be a requirement.
- 4.7 The requirement of 40% affordable housing is proposed to be met through a financial contribution. We understand from research and communication with policy planners that this would be the preferred approach.
- 4.8 Please refer to the architect's design and access statement for an explanation of the layout, scale, appearance, and landscaping proposed.

5.0 Planning Policy Considerations:

- 5.1 Relevant planning considerations comprise government policy within the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance, and the Development Plan for the site. The Development Plan comprises Wokingham Core Strategy (Adopted 2010), and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Adopted 2014)
- 5.2 Other important material considerations include various adopted Supplementary Planning Documents, the 2021 Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy Consultation and the emerging Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 5.3 Supplementary planning guidance includes:
 - Affordable Housing.
 - Borough Design Guide.

- Sustainable Design and Construction; and
- Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024):

5.4 The Framework states that the main purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The relevant sections of the framework pertinent to the application proposal have been identified below:

Text in italics are my notes.

5.5 Paragraph eight states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways;

- an economic objective – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being, and;

- an environmental objective – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

5.6 Paragraph 11 of the framework sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. This paragraph states that where there are no relevant development plan policies or where the development plan is out of date, planning permission should be granted, that is unless;

- i. the application of policies in the framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, 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.

For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; 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

Decision making:

- 5.7 Section four of the framework states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Delivering a sufficient supply of homes:

- 5.8 Section five of the framework encourages a sufficient amount and variety of housing land to significantly boost the supply of homes.
- 5.9 Paragraph 64 advises:

Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required (including the minimum proportion of Social Rent homes required), and expect it to be met on-site unless:

 - a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and
 - b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

In this case, we understand that a financial contribution could be justified as mobile homes are themselves unlikely to provide suitable affordable housing to be

managed by a registered social landlord. Mobile homes will, if permitted, contribute to the local housing mix, allowing for downsizing.

Identifying land for homes:

5.10 Paragraph 73 acknowledges the important contribution that medium sized sites can make to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built-out relatively quickly. Councils are advised to support the development of windfall sites through their decisions. *This site provides such an opportunity alongside the emerging allocation.*

Promoting sustainable transport

5.11 Section nine (Promoting Sustainable Transport) states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan making and development proposals.

Making efficient use of land

5.12 Section 11 advises that planning policies, and decisions should promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

Achieving well designed places:

5.13 Section 12 of the framework states that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to the objectives of the planning and development process.

5.14 Paragraph 135 advises that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments;

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks, and;
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

A carefully considered, attractive and good quality development is proposed to sustain the character of the surrounding area.

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

5.15 Section 14 requires a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change. New development should avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

5.16 Section 15 states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

The Development Plan:

5.17 The Development Plan for the site comprises the Wokingham Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery DPD.

Wokingham Core Strategy (2010)

5.18 Relevant policies are set out below. Explanatory notes relating to the proposed development are in *italics*:

5.19 Policy CP1- Sustainable Development, advises that planning permission will be granted for sustainable forms of development.

5.20 Policy CP2- Inclusive Communities, requires that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities. This includes granting planning permission for developments that address the requirements of all people. Sites should be located either close to or within the limits of development to maximise possibilities for social inclusion and sustainable patterns of living. Sites should not be disproportionate to the scale of the existing settlement.

5.21 Policy CP3- General Principles for Development, sets out a list of criteria for consideration and advises that planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

“a) Are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life;

b) Provide a functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable scheme;

c) Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.

d) Maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species;

e) Use the full potential of the site and contribute to the support for suitable complementary facilities and uses;

f) Contribute to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings (especially existing dwellings) including the use of appropriate landscaping;

g) Provide for a framework of open space in secure community use achieving at least 4.65 ha/1,000 population provision together with recreational/sporting facilities in addition to private amenity space;

h) Contribute towards the provision of an appropriate sustainable network of community facilities;

i) Do not lead to a net loss of dwellings and other residential accommodation or land; and

j) Do not lead to a loss of community or recreational facilities/land or infrastructure unless suitable alternative provision is available.”

5.22 Policy CP4 - Infrastructure Requirements, requires improvements to the required standard that are to be secured by condition or through a planning obligation.

5.23 Policy CP5 - Housing Mix, Density and Affordability. This policy requires a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures and sizes. The minimum percentage of affordable housing for this site is 40%, subject to viability.

5.24 Policy CP6 - Managing Travel Demand, requires that development is in a sustainable location, with appropriate vehicle parking and designed to prevent highway problems.

5.25 Policy CP7- Biodiversity, advises that development must not harm designated wildlife sites or habitats.

5.26 Policy CP8- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. This policy protects this specific area from harm. Mitigation against any potential adverse effects is required for a residential site such as this, within 5km of the protected area.

5.27 Policy CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals, states that the scale of development proposals in Wokingham Borough must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location, together with their accessibility. Development locations are identified.

5.28 Policy CP11 – Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside). This policy guards against development outside the development limits. This is to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment.

5.29 Policy CP17- Housing Delivery. This policy advises the need for the provision of new housing during the plan period that is to 2026. Allocated sites are to be brought forward as needed to meet the supply of housing land.

The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan DPD (2014)

5.30 Policy CC01 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, follows Government policy and states that:

“1. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:
 - a. Any adverse impacts of planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) taken as a whole; or
 - b. Specific policies in the National Planning Policy Framework indicate that development should be restricted.”

5.31 Policy CC02 - Development Limits states that:

“Planning permission for proposals at the edge of settlements will only be granted where they can demonstrate that the development, including boundary treatments, is within development limits and respects the transition between the built up area and the open countryside by taking account of the character of the adjacent countryside and landscape.”

5.32 Policy CC03 - Green Infrastructure, Trees, and Landscaping, requires protection of the Borough’s landscape. This includes retention of existing trees and hedging and high quality new native landscaping as part of a scheme, as well as integration with neighbouring public open spaces.

5.33 Policy CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction, requires the delivery of high quality sustainably designed and constructed developments.

5.34 Policy CC05 – Renewable Energy, requires a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions.

5.35 Policy CC06 – Noise, prevents unacceptable impact.

5.36 Policy CC07- Parking, requires parking provision to meet the required standard in Appendix 2 of the MDD. For a town and fringe area, between 1 and 2 car parking spaces are required depending on the size of unit.

5.37 Policy CC09 – Development and Flood Risk advises that development should be guided to the lowest flood risk areas.

5.38 Policy CC010 – Sustainable Drainage, requires carefully planned drainage strategies to meet the long terms needs of the development.

5.39 Policy TB05- Housing mix. This policy advises:

“1. Proposals for residential development shall provide for an appropriate housing mix which reflects a balance between the underlying character of the area and both the current and projected needs of households. Any scheme that requires the provision of affordable housing should provide an appropriate mix of accommodation on a site by site basis, which reflects the Council’s Housing Strategy and the Affordable Housing SPD.

2. A proportion of all dwellings must be built to Lifetime Homes Standards. The proportion will be determined on a site-by-site basis, normally within the range of 10-20%”

5.40 Policy TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens, advises:

“Proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will only be granted planning permission where:

a) The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:

- i. The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;
- ii. A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and
- iii. Existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage

Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries.

- v. Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area
- vi. The materials and elevational detail are of high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary.

b) The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking

c) The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards

d) The proposal does not lead to unacceptable tandem development

e) The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas and avoids the need for additional physical security measures.

5.41 Policy TB07- Internal Space Standards, sets out internal layout and size standards for new dwellings.

5.42 Policy TB08 - Open Space, sport and recreational facilities standards for residential development, requires the provision of open space as part of the new development. This may include off site provision through financial contributions in some circumstances.

5.43 Policy TB12 – Employment Skills Plan, advises that proposals for major development should be accompanied by an Employment and Skills plan to show how the proposal accords opportunities for training, apprenticeship or other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills required by developers, contractors or end users of the proposal.

5.44 Policy TB21- Landscape Character, requires:

- “1. Proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council’s Landscape Character Assessment, including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues.
2. Proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.”

5.45 Policy TB23- Biodiversity and Development, requires protection an enhancement, offering opportunities to incorporate new biodiversity features, buffer zones and wildlife corridors.

5.46 Policy TB25 – Archaeology

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2012).

5.47 This guide amplifies the policies within the Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan. It provides advice on general design and layout principles to ensure high quality new development. This includes advice on rural and settlement edge developments.

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2013).

5.48 This document includes detailed advice on the provision of affordable housing within new residential developments. This includes advice on housing standards, mix and tenure.

Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (2010) and companion document

5.49 This sets out the detail of policy requirements for sustainability including minimising energy consumption, carbon reduction, water resource management, biodiversity, waste management, pollution, and recycling. The companion document advises on renewable energy.

Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions (2011)

5.50 This policy document advises on the mechanism for securing contributions towards infrastructure delivery and enhancement.

Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan

5.51 The site is allocated as a housing site within the draft Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2038 (5F1003 31/33 Barkham Ride – 66 dwellings), that was adopted on 21st September 2023.

Wokingham Local Plan – Revised Growth Strategy

5.52 The application site is part of a site promoted through the Council's call for sites process. 31 and 33 Barkham Ride together are identified with reference ADH1 and 5F1003. The site is proposed to be allocated as a residential site for 66 units in the emerging Draft that underwent a further consultation from September to November 2024.

SFI003	31-33 Barkham Ride, Finchampstead	Area (ha): 5.42 Land use: Proposed for housing	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vehicle access from Barkham Ride- Housing to reflect the character of the surrounding residential area- Retain, where possible, onsite mature and protected trees- Opportunities to provide connectivity to areas of open space through the site and the surrounding area, including Rooks Nest Wood Country Park which abuts the western boundary
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6.0 Planning considerations:

6.1 We understand that the main issues for consideration are:

- Principle of Development.
- Impact upon the character of the area.
- Quality of accommodation, dwelling mix, and tenure.
- Highway access and parking.
- Landscaping and Trees
- Ecology.
- Thames Basin Heath protected area.
- Building Sustainability.
- Waste storage.
- Flooding and drainage.

Principle of Development.

6.2 The site is already developed with one dwelling and its' garden land, as well as land providing extended amenity space for Victoria Gardens Mobile home park. It lies within the countryside and outside the settlement boundary, in a sustainable location being close to facilities and services within Finchampstead. This sustainability has influenced its allocation in the emerging Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. Although the site is currently in an area subject to policies restricting new development, the emerging allocations both demonstrate that the site offers a sustainable housing site.

Outline planning permission has been granted for 26 houses, as detailed earlier in this statement.

6.3 The site contains garden land and extended amenity space for the existing mobile homes. Policy TB06 does not allow for the scale of development proposed on garden land, however this policy is to be viewed together with the proposed housing allocations, the sustainable edge of settlement location and the recently granted outline planning permission.

6.4 Findings and advice within the transport statement and the energy and sustainability statement confirm a sustainable site and proposal to meet the required standards.

Housing Need

6.5 It has been confirmed by the Council and through appeal decisions that the Council's land supply is below the required four or five years. This is as detailed in the committee report relating to the permitted 26 unit scheme and in subsequent

committee reports relating to new housing development outside the settlement boundary. This policy approach engages paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the NPPF. This states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless the “adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

- 6.6 The revised scheme offers the benefit of providing new housing as well as encouraging downsizing from family homes, thus releasing larger units onto the housing market.

Impact upon the character of the area.

- 6.7 We have worked to propose a sensitive layout to complement the character of the area on this edge of settlement site in compliance with Policies CP3 and CP5 of the 2010 Core Strategy and Policy TB05 of the 2014 MDD Local Plan. This includes robust landscape boundaries as well as landscaping within the site. The development proposed offers an alternative to the permitted housing scheme, with a reduced impact because all units are single storey.
- 6.8 Careful attention has been taken to design a layout to ensure a sensitive transition to the SANG open space to the side and the woodland to the rear of the site. No units are closer to boundaries than in the indicative layout for the permitted housing scheme. A benefit of the scheme in comparison with the approved housing scheme is a reduced visual impact and a gentler transition between the settlement boundary and the SANG.

6.9 The proposed density at 23.3 units per hectare follows the recommendations within policy CP5 of the Core Strategy and policy TB05 of the Local Plan that seek to ensure a density in character with the local area. In this case the layout extends and reflects the existing park home estate layout.

Quality of accommodation, dwelling mix, and tenure

6.10 Good quality residential accommodation is proposed, in accordance with the required site license standards that would also comply with the Nationally Described Space Standard for housing. This follows Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB05 of the Local Plan. The proposed mix offers 2 bedroom homes to meet a local demand.

6.11 Amenity space is proposed in compliance with site license requirements and includes communal space. All units will benefit from proximity to the neighbouring SANG open space.

Highway access and parking

6.12 The Transport Report accompanying this application includes the following summary and conclusion:

In summary, this Transport Statement has identified the following:

- Bus services are accessible within close proximity of the site;
- Regular rail services are available from both Wokingham and Crowthorne stations;

- The site benefits from on foot access to the residential area of Finchampstead, where amenities can be accessed;
- Suitable vehicular access to the site will be achieved from Barkham Ride;
- Appropriate levels of car and cycle parking will be provided on-site;
- The proposals would not lead to a material increase in traffic generation on the surrounding network in the weekday peak hours and over a typical weekday. Indeed, the level of traffic generated would be less than the previous consent.

In view of the above, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in transport terms and meets with local and national policy criteria. The assessment work undertaken has shown that there will not be any demonstrable harm arising from the proposed scheme and it will not cause any severe impacts. Therefore, there are no traffic or transport related reasons why the development should not be granted planning consent.

Landscaping and Trees

6.13 The proposed development is designed and laid out to maintain existing landscaping including existing robust landscape boundaries to the north and west. New native landscaping is proposed within the development.

The Arboricultural Assessment and Method Statement accompanying the application advises on works to trees and their protection.

6.14 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment undertaken concludes as follows:

- The assessment identifies that the development will be visible from limited public locations to the south and west of the proposal. The impacts resulting have been classed as short-term moderately adverse during installation. These will revert to a no-change effect as the mitigation proposals establish and eventually have a long-term moderately beneficial impact especially

with sustained landscape management. Close views are limited to the properties bordering the southern section of the site.

- With sensitive architectural and landscape design the character of the site is respected with built form contained visually by strong landscape enclosure with mixed age tree screening and new mixed-age framework planting. The Park Homes layout will create the basis for an accessible, manageable landscape subject to detailed agreement.
- The proposal offers landscape opportunities for visual integration and long-term management benefits.
- The long-term Management Plan will guide the establishment of the reinforced landscape screen and improved boundary habitat. With the inclusion of appropriate surface water drainage the landscape framework/green infrastructure will provide a practical transition zone that allows new species to establish. In combination this proposal effects a positive transition between the study site, Rooks Nest Wood Country Park and the wider countryside.
- The proposal will initially have a moderately adverse impact on the edge of settlement character of the site. However once the long-term management plan is implemented then there is a vision for the successful integration of the proposed development within the local context and an enhancement of the 'Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands' Landscape Character Area M1.

Ecology

6.15 The ecology survey and bat roost assessment undertaken have confirmed no potential bat roosting features. Ecological mitigation is proposed including protection for nesting birds and flora and fauna during any development work. Biodiversity Enhancements of integrated bat bricks, bee bricks and bird nesting bricks are recommended in the new houses. A native wildlife scheme is also

recommended for any landscaping. Recommendations will be fully adopted in the detailed scheme.

6.16 The Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Note confirms the following:

The assessment completed demonstrates that the scheme can achieve a biodiversity net gain by enhancing existing habitats and by new planting, all of which will be managed sensitively by a management company. In addition, there are opportunities to introduce a range of other benefits, such as the provision of wildlife boxes, that will result in an overall ecological benefit in comparison to the existing on-site conditions in full compliance with National and Local Policy.

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protected Area.

6.17 The site is within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). In this case contributions will be needed towards Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) as well as a financial contribution for ongoing monitoring (SAMM). The site lies adjacent to Rooks Nest Wood Country Park that is an 18.2 hectare Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) that was developed in 2011 to provide an informal recreation area for new and existing residents of the Borough.

We await advice on whether a contribution can be made towards the maintenance of this existing provision.

Waste storage.

6.18 Waste and recycling storage will be provided in accordance with the required standard.

Flooding and drainage

6.19 A flood risk assessment and drainage strategy accompanies the application. This confirms acceptability and policy compliance in terms of flood risk and capacity to discharge surface water runoff from the development.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 This application proposal represents a sensible and beneficial scheme to provide an extension to Victoria Gardens Residential Park Home Estate, offering 35 new park homes in a sustainable location to meet demand for new housing. A new community building including a park office is also proposed to serve existing and new residents.

7.2 The layout and proposed scale of development has been carefully conceived to ensure that it will result in a sensitive form of development that will respect the character and appearance of the surrounding local area. This includes neighbouring residential development as well as open space and woodland.

7.3 The proposed residential redevelopment is in accordance with national and local planning policy. Planning permission is respectfully sought.