PLANNING STATEMENT

Site address: 1 Simonds Grove, Spencers Wood, RG7 1BH

Proposal: Retrospective application for the conversion of an integrated garage into a Home Office and Home Gym

1. Introduction & Background

1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a retrospective Householder Planning Application for the conversion of an existing integrated garage space into a functional Home Office and Home Gym, incidental use to the main dwelling at 1 Simonds Grove, Wokingham.

1.2 The conversion meets modern flexible home-working and personal well-being requirements without expanding the overall external footprint or building envelope of the dwellinghouse.

1.3 **Legal Context & Planning History:**

Internal alterations to a residential property are ordinarily deemed non-development under Section 55(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. However, because of Condition 19 of planning permission 161255 applying across the estate (restricting garage alterations to preserve parking), a formal Householder Planning Application has been prepared and submitted. This application addresses those requirements directly to regularise the space, mirroring the precedent set across the estate at 3 Simonds Grove, Wokingham RG7 1BH.

2. Site Context & Assessment of Development

2.1 The application site comprises a dwelling house within an established cul-de-sac (estate). The surrounding context is defined by consistent architectural styles, residential layouts, and formatted off-street parking.

2.2 **Assessment of Submitted Plans:**

- **External Appearance & Streetscene:** The conversion maintains the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider street scene. The external garage door is retained to maintain the outward appearance.
- **Footprint & Massing:** The garage conversion involves zero increase in overall building footprint, gross internal ground-floor area, or massing beyond the existing building envelope.
- **Impact on Amenity:** As the conversion was internal, it did not create any risk of overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, or loss of daylight/sunlight for adjacent properties.
- **Use Incidental to the Dwelling:** The converted room connects internally to the main house and has no kitchen and no separate access. The bathroom serves the home office and gym, and the room is not a separate unit of accommodation.

3. Highways, Parking & Accessibility

3.1 Maintaining adequate parking provision in accordance with Local Authority standards is a primary objective of Condition 19 across the estate. The stated reason for the condition is “to ensure provision of adequate parking and reduce the likelihood of unplanned roadside parking”.

3.2 **Parking Capacity Assessment:**

- **Retained Off-Street Parking:** The site, 1 Simonds Grove, retains its 2 allocated off-street parking spaces: the driveway space in front of the garage and the allocated bay at the end of the spur, as shown on the submitted site plan.
- **Estate Capacity:** Ample additional parking capacity is available across the estate layout.
- **Guest Parking:** In addition to the retained private spaces, 2 designated guest/visitor parking spaces are located directly opposite the subject site, ensuring that visitor parking will not cause congestion or overspill onto the private spur serving the site, which does not form part of the adopted highway. Further guest parking spaces are scattered around the estate.
- **Public Transport:** Public transport is accessible on Hyde End Road, which provides a direct link to Reading Town centre.
- Refuse vehicles turn on the main estate road and do not enter the spur (approved swept-path drawing 08.1, Iceni, permission 161255).

3.3 **Detailed Parking Assessment:** A full assessment of parking provision against the Council's parking standards (MDD Appendix 2), the approved parking schedule for permission 161255, and the further parking space available within the Plot 1 title boundary is provided at **Appendix A: Parking Assessment**, submitted with this statement.

4. Planning Policy & Precedent Analysis

4.1 The development aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) regarding the efficient and sustainable use of existing residential floor space, alongside policies within the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery DPD.

4.2 **Established Planning Precedent (Ref: 260392 / 3 Simonds Grove):**

- A direct comparative application was recently deemed acceptable by Wokingham Council for a garage conversion at 3 Simonds Grove, Spencers Wood (Ref: 260392).
- In that application, the principle of converting internal garage space into gym space while retaining 2 off-street parking spaces within the curtilage was recognised as policy-compliant and acceptable in planning terms.
- Granting permission at 1 Simonds Grove maintains a consistent, fair, and objective approach by Wokingham Borough Council within the immediate residential context.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The retrospective conversion of the garage into a home office and gym represents a proportionate and sustainable adaptation of residential space that upholds the original planning objectives of the estate.

5.2 The proposal retains 2 dedicated off-street parking spaces, with a further space available within the plot, meeting the Council's parking standards (MDD Appendix 2) without reliance on the garage (see Appendix A), protects residential amenity, preserves the visual character of the estate, and reflects established local planning precedent at 3 Simonds Grove (Ref: 260392).

5.3 The Local Planning Authority is respectfully requested to support the application and grant planning permission.