

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposal:

Conversion and extension of the existing garage and infilling of the covered link to provide ancillary accommodation, together with the erection of a first-floor side extension, associated dormer windows, roof alterations and alterations to fenestration.

Site:

Tall Trees, Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4ES

Local Planning Authority:

Wokingham Borough Council

Applicant:

Mr Muhammad Arslan Shahid

Agent:

Sikandar Ali
Architectural Designer – SA Associates

Prepared By:

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Date:

12 September 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a householder planning application at Tall Trees, Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead (“the site”). It assesses the proposed development against the adopted development plan, relevant national planning policy and the informal pre-application advice issued by Wokingham Borough Council under reference 261615 on 24 August 2026.
- 1.2 This Statement should be read alongside the submitted application drawings and accompanying arboricultural information.

2. The Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 Tall Trees is a substantial detached dwelling occupying a large, irregularly shaped plot on the western side of Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead, within the defined development limits. The property is set well back from the highway behind a generous frontage with a post-and-rail boundary treatment and mature hedging, and benefits from an extensive private garden to the rear.
- 2.2 The surrounding area is characterised by detached dwellings on generously-sized plots, with substantial spacing between properties and significant tree cover, giving the locality a spacious and verdant character. The neighbouring properties most relevant to this assessment are Lorien (to the north) and Yarra (to the rear/south).
- 2.3 The site contains a number of trees protected by Tree Preservation Order, including those covered by TPO-1748-2020 and TPO-0283-1985. Approximately 12 protected trees are located within or adjacent to the site. The application is accompanied by arboricultural information assessing the relationship between the proposed development and those trees.

3. Description of the Proposed Development

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for the conversion and extension of the existing garage and the infilling of the covered link between the garage and dwelling to provide ancillary living accommodation for the applicant’s elderly parents. The proposal also includes a first-floor side extension above part of the garage, associated dormer windows, roof alterations and alterations to fenestration. The first-floor extension would provide additional bedroom accommodation within the principal dwelling.
- 3.2 The proposal is materially consistent with the scheme considered through the pre-application process under reference 261615. The ancillary accommodation would have an external entrance together with a direct internal connection to the remainder of the dwelling. The external entrance would provide convenient and accessible ground-floor access for the intended elderly occupants but would not, in itself, result in the creation of a separate planning unit.

3.3 The accommodation has been designed to allow the applicant's parents to reside within the family home while benefiting from accessible, ground-floor accommodation arranged to meet their day-to-day needs. The accommodation would remain physically and functionally integrated with the principal dwelling and occupied as part of the same household.

4. Relevant Planning History

4.1 Planning permission was granted under reference F/2014/0938 on 19 June 2014 for a two-storey front extension, an enlarged rear dormer extension and a pitched roof to the front elevation of the detached garage.

4.2 That permission is relevant insofar as the Council previously accepted substantial alterations and additions to the dwelling, including an enlarged rear dormer and roof alterations associated with the garage. The current proposal must be assessed on its own merits, but the permission forms part of the established planning context of the site.

5. Pre-Application advice

5.1 Pre-application advice was sought and obtained from the Council under reference 261615 (response dated 24 August 2026), based on drawings materially the same as those now submitted. The Council's advice was, in summary, positive:

- the principle of development was considered acceptable, the site being within the settlement boundary;
- the ground floor works were considered to remain subordinate additions that would be well integrated with the existing built form;
- the first floor extension was considered to appear as a subservient addition that would not compete with the original dwelling in visual terms;
- no harmful impact upon neighbouring residential amenity was identified, including in relation to the proposed Juliet balcony;
- the Tree and Landscape Officer raised no objection in principle, subject to the submission of an appropriate Arboricultural Impact Assessment; and
- the Council's overall summary was that the project accords with national and local policy and is likely to be acceptable.

5.2 The pre-application advice is not binding upon the Council, and the application must be determined on the basis of the submitted plans, supporting information and representations received. Nevertheless, the advice provides a relevant indication of the Council's assessment of a materially comparable scheme, including the proposed external access to the ancillary accommodation. The submitted proposal continues to reflect the scale, form and relationships assessed positively at pre-application stage, subject to the accompanying arboricultural evidence.

6. Planning Policy Context

6.1 The statutory development plan comprises the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) and the made Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (2023), together with other relevant adopted development plan documents. The following policies and guidance are of particular relevance to the determination of this application:

- Core Strategy Policies CP1 (Sustainable Development), CP3 (General Principles for Development), CP6 (Managing Travel Demand) and CP9 (Scale and Location of Development);
- Managing Development Delivery Policies CC01 (Sustainable Development), CC02 (Development Limits), CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping), CC04 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and TB23 (Biodiversity and Development);
- relevant policies of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan;
- the Borough Design Guide SPD; and
- the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

6.2 The Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023–2040 has been submitted for examination and the examination hearing sessions have concluded. The examining Inspectors have subsequently indicated that the Plan is likely capable of being found sound and legally compliant subject to modifications. Relevant emerging policies may therefore be afforded appropriate weight having regard to their stage of preparation, the extent of unresolved objections and their consistency with national policy.

6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026 is a material consideration in the determination of the application. Its relevant decision-making policies support a plan-led approach and the achievement of high-quality, context-responsive development while safeguarding residential amenity and valued landscape features, including trees.

7. Assessment

Principle of Development

7.1 The site lies wholly within the defined development limits, where the development plan supports appropriate development. The proposed works comprise the extension and reconfiguration of an established residential dwelling and raise no strategic issue of principle. The principle of development is therefore acceptable.

Character and Appearance

7.2 Policy CP3 requires development to be appropriate in scale, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to its context, and to be of high-quality design without detriment to amenity.

7.3 The ground-floor works comprise the conversion and extension of the existing garage and the infilling of the covered link between the garage and dwelling. Although these works would increase the footprint of the building, they would remain single storey, closely related to the established built form and well contained within the substantial plot. Their scale, siting and visual relationship with the dwelling accord with the conclusions reached by the Council at pre-application stage.

7.4 The first-floor element would be set down from the ridge of the principal roof and would not extend across the full width of the garage below. These features would allow it to read as a subservient addition without competing with the primary massing of the dwelling. The Council previously accepted substantial alterations and additions to the dwelling under reference F/2014/0938, including an enlarged rear dormer and roof alterations associated with the garage. Subject to the use of matching materials, which may appropriately be secured by condition, the proposed extension would preserve the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider street scene, consistent with Policy CP3 and the Borough Design Guide.

7.5 The proposed external entrance serving the ground-floor ancillary accommodation would be a modest alteration viewed within the context of the wider front elevation. Its design and positioning would integrate satisfactorily with the existing fenestration and would not materially alter the unified appearance of Tall Trees as a single dwellinghouse. The entrance would provide convenient level access for the applicant's elderly parents and would not cause harm to the character or appearance of the host dwelling or street scene.

Residential Amenity

7.6 Policy CP3 requires that development should not be detrimental to the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

7.7 The ground-floor works would be situated approximately 3.4 metres from the nearest shared boundary. Having regard to their single-storey scale, siting and separation from neighbouring dwellings, they would not result in any materially harmful overbearing effect or loss of light or outlook to the occupiers of Lorien or Yarra.

7.8 The first-floor extension would similarly remain well separated from neighbouring dwellings. The Juliet balcony would be approximately 12.75 metres from Yarra, principally affording oblique views across part of its side garden, and approximately 22 metres from 47 Chivers Drive. The latter distance accords with the Borough Design Guide's minimum back-to-back separation guideline. Existing boundary planting would provide some additional filtering of views, although the acceptability of the relationship does not depend upon that screening. Accordingly, the proposal would not result in unacceptable overlooking or loss of privacy.

7.9 No harmful impact upon residential amenity was identified in the Council's pre-application assessment, and none would arise from the proposal submitted for determination.

Trees and Landscaping

7.10 Policy CC03 requires that development protect, and where possible enhance, existing landscape features including trees. The Council's Landscape and Tree Officer raised no objection in principle to the pre-application scheme, while requesting further arboricultural information to properly assess the relationship between the proposed development and the protected trees on the site.

7.11 The application is accompanied by arboricultural information prepared by a suitably qualified arboricultural consultant, including a Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and, where required, an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan. These documents assess the relationship between the development and the protected trees and identify the measures necessary to avoid unacceptable arboricultural harm.

7.12 Subject to compliance with the protection and construction measures identified within the submitted arboricultural documents, the proposal would safeguard the protected trees and the contribution they make to the verdant character of the locality. Compliance with those measures may appropriately be secured by condition.

Highways and Parking

7.13 Policy CP6 seeks to ensure safe and sufficient parking provision. The proposal results in the loss of the existing double garage as a parking structure; however, the property retains a substantial front courtyard and driveway area capable of accommodating in excess of five vehicles off-street, as confirmed by the Council at pre-application stage. No harm to highway safety or parking provision would arise.

Ancillary Accommodation

7.14 The presence of facilities capable of supporting day-to-day living does not, by itself, establish the creation of a separate planning unit. As recognised in *Uttlesford District Council v Secretary of State for the Environment and White* [1991] 2 PLR 76; [1992] JPL 171, the question is one of fact and degree, having regard to the physical and functional relationship between the accommodation and the principal dwelling and the manner in which it would be occupied.

7.15 The accommodation would be physically incorporated into the enlarged dwelling, would retain a direct internal connection with the main family accommodation and is intended to be occupied by the applicant's parents as part of the same household. It would not have a separate curtilage, parking provision, postal address or independent utility arrangements and would not be let, sold or otherwise occupied separately from the main dwelling.

7.16 The proposed external entrance would provide convenient and accessible ground-floor access for the intended elderly occupants, including having regard to their mobility needs. The presence of an external entrance would not, by itself, result in the creation of a separate planning unit. In this case, the retained internal connection, shared curtilage,

absence of separate parking and utility arrangements and intended pattern of family occupation demonstrate that the accommodation would remain functionally ancillary to the principal dwelling.

- 7.17 An appropriately worded condition requiring the accommodation to remain ancillary to the occupation of Tall Trees as a single dwellinghouse would provide a proportionate and enforceable means of preventing its independent residential occupation.

8. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 8.1 The proposal is for modest, well-related householder development, comprising the conversion and extension of existing built form to provide ancillary accommodation for elderly relatives with mobility issues, together with a first-floor bedroom extension.
- 8.2 The principle of development is acceptable within the settlement boundary. The proposed additions would remain subordinate to the host dwelling and would preserve its character and appearance and that of the wider street scene. No unacceptable harm would arise to neighbouring residential amenity, highway safety or parking provision. The scheme has been the subject of positive pre-application advice based upon materially the same development, including an external entrance serving the ancillary accommodation. That entrance would provide convenient ground-floor access for the intended elderly occupants, while the retained internal connection and shared physical and functional arrangements would ensure that the accommodation remains part of the single dwellinghouse.
- 8.3 The submitted arboricultural evidence assesses the relationship between the proposed development and the protected trees and identifies appropriate measures for their protection during construction. Those measures are capable of being secured through appropriately worded planning conditions. The ancillary occupation of the ground-floor accommodation can similarly be appropriately controlled by condition.
- 8.4 Having regard to the design, scale and siting of the proposed development, the positive pre-application advice and the submitted supporting evidence, the proposal accords with the development plan when read as a whole. No material considerations indicate that permission should be withheld. It is respectfully submitted that planning permission should be granted, subject to appropriate conditions.