



PLANNING BY DESIGN
FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

Design and Access Statement

**Holly Tree House, Heath Ride, Finchampstead,
Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 3QN**

**Erection of a Domestic Outbuilding (Garden Store &
Garage)**

On behalf of Southern Oak Ltd

V1

Prepared by: **Planning By Design**

Application

Planning By Design (the agent) has been instructed to act on behalf of Southern Oak Ltd (the applicant) to submit a householder planning application to Wokingham Borough Council (the Local Planning Authority) for the erection of a domestic outbuilding (garden store & garage) within the residential curtilage at Holly Tree House, Heath Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 3QN (the site).

This Design and Access Statement demonstrates the suitability of the site for the proposed development and evaluates its accordance with national and local planning policy.

Site Location and Description

The application site comprises Holly Tree House (formerly Whitley House), a substantial detached two-storey, five-bedroom dwelling set within an extensive residential curtilage. The property is located off Heath Ride, within the parish of Finchampstead in the south-west of the borough of Wokingham.

The dwelling is accessed via a long private driveway from Heath Ride, positioned set well back from the public highway and extensive garden land extending around it. The immediate surroundings are characterised by detached dwellings set within generous plots, with a transitional rural-residential character.

The site lies outside the defined Development Limits of the borough and is accordingly designated as countryside for the purposes of the Core Strategy. The site is covered by the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan and falls within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Linear Mitigation Zone, the Consultation Zone for a Major Nuclear Site, the Farnborough and Heathrow Aerodrome Safeguarding Zones, the Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Model, the Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone, the SSSI Impact Risk Zone, the Water Utility Consultation Zone and the 2019 Landscape Character Assessment. None of these designations preclude a residential outbuilding of the kind proposed. The site is not within the Green Belt, a conservation area or an area at elevated flood risk, and the dwelling is not listed.

The Proposal

The proposal is the erection of a domestic outbuilding (garden store & garage) within the residential curtilage of Holly Tree House, to serve the occupiers of the dwelling. The building will be used primarily to house our ride-on mower. The size of the garden makes a ride-on mower essential, and locating the store within the rear garden avoids the need to drive the mower round from the front of the house each time it is used. A covered, enclosed space also

allows the mower to be serviced and repaired under cover during poor weather. In addition, the building will provide a sheltered area for storing garden furniture out of season, together with garden tools and ancillary equipment.

The overall external footprint measures 15 metres by 6.2 metres. The roof is dual-pitched, with an eaves height of 3 metres and a ridge height of 5 metres. The building is sited within the existing garden to the rear of Holly Tree House, set approximately 1 metre from the side boundary.

The external appearance reflects a traditional oak-framed agricultural barn form, with exposed oak posts, beams and curved braces, timber cladding above a brick plinth base, and timber doors to the openings. The front elevation presents three enclosed bays with doors alongside one open bay which provides sheltered ancillary storage. Further door are set to the side. The building will be used solely for purposes ancillary and incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse and contains no residential accommodation.

Planning History

Two planning applications have been determined at the site. Application F/1998/67418 sought a single-storey side and rear extension to the dwelling together with two detached garages, one with a studio above, and was refused in July 1998. Application F/1998/68808 sought a single-storey rear extension to form a conservatory and study, and was approved in February 1999. Three pre-1998 applications are listed on the Council's register (references 24715, 33866 and 34993) but full details are not publicly available.

Planning Policy Framework

The statutory development plan for the site comprises the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (adopted January 2010), the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (adopted February 2014) and the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (made 2023). The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) is a material consideration. The emerging Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040 was submitted for examination in February 2025; while capable of being accorded some weight under paragraph 49 of the NPPF, it is not yet adopted and is not determinative in this case.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

Paragraph 11 establishes 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". The presumption is directly engaged because the proposal accords with the development plan read as a whole.

Paragraph 131 provides that "the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve". This principle informs the design-led approach taken to the proposal.

Paragraph 135 sets out that planning decisions should ensure that developments: function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; establish or maintain a strong sense of place; optimise the potential of the site; and 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.

Paragraph 139 provides that development which is not well designed should be refused, and that "significant weight should be given to... development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design".

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010)

Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) supports development that maintains or enhances environmental quality, avoids pollution, provides adequate drainage, minimises resource consumption, and delivers attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes.

Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development) supports proposals of an appropriate scale, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area with a high quality of design, without detriment to the amenities of adjoining occupiers; with no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage or landscape features; that maintain or enhance the site's ability to support fauna and flora; and that contribute to a sense of place.

Policy CP7 (Biodiversity) conserves sites of international, national and local biodiversity importance and resists development that would harm protected habitats or species, subject to mitigation or compensation where strictly necessary.

Policy CP11 (Proposals outside Development Limits including countryside) provides that proposals outside development limits will not normally be permitted except in defined categories, including where, in the case of residential extensions, the proposal "does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building". The

policy applies to the current proposal because the site sits outside defined development limits.

Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)

Policy CC01 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) mirrors the NPPF presumption: applications that accord with the development plan are to be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping) requires development to protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features and to incorporate high quality, ideally native, planting and landscaping as an integral part of the scheme.

Policy CC04 (Sustainable Design and Construction) requires high quality sustainably designed and constructed development and, for all development including extensions, the incorporation of suitable waste management facilities.

Policy CC07 (Parking) requires proposed parking to meet the standards set out in Appendix 2 of the MDD and the retention of an appropriate overall level of off-street parking.

Policy TB21 (Landscape Character) requires proposals to demonstrate how they have addressed the Council's Landscape Character Assessment and to retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

Policy TB23 (Biodiversity and Development) requires compliance with Policy CP7 and requires proposals to provide opportunities for new or enhanced biodiversity features, provide appropriate buffer zones between development and designated sites, and ensure that new and existing developments are ecologically permeable.

Supplementary guidance and Neighbourhood Plan

The Wokingham Borough Design Guide SPD (2012), the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2010) and the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (made 2023) form part of the policy context. The Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan promotes the protection of the rural character of the parish and a high standard of design in new development.

Assessment

Development Principle

The proposal is a single detached domestic outbuilding ancillary to the existing dwellinghouse, sited entirely within the established residential curtilage of Holly Tree House. The principle of

a modest, well-designed outbuilding and garden store within a residential curtilage is well established and is broadly acceptable subject to compliance with development plan policies on scale, design, character and amenity.

The site lies outside the Council's defined Development Limits and the proposal therefore falls to be considered against Policy CP11. Although CP11 does not expressly list domestic outbuildings ancillary to an existing dwelling, the proposal is consistent with the policy's underlying objective of protecting the separate identity of settlements and maintaining the quality of the environment. The outbuilding is contained wholly within the existing residential curtilage; it does not encroach into open countryside beyond that curtilage; it does not increase the scale, form or footprint of the principal dwelling; and its footprint represents around 1.3 per cent of the wider plot and is of modest and proportionate scale. The proposal is therefore an acceptable form of development within the countryside.

The proposal is sustainable development within the meaning of paragraph 11 of the NPPF and Policy CC01. It accords with the development plan read as a whole; there are no adverse impacts of significance; and the balance under paragraph 11 falls decisively in favour of grant.

Design and Character

The design takes an overtly traditional oak-framed form that reflects the rural-residential character of Heath Ride and the established domestic character of Holly Tree House. The structure is single-storey, of modest height at 5 metres to the ridge and 3 metres to the eaves, and is constructed of authentic materials: exposed oak frame with posts, beams and curved braces, timber cladding over a brick plinth, and doors. These materials are appropriate to a countryside setting and complement both the existing dwelling and the wider landscape.

The building is sited to the rear of the dwelling, set behind the main property when viewed from Heath Ride, and is further screened by existing boundary vegetation. The proposal will not be prominent in public views. The form is visually attractive, well-proportioned and sympathetic to local character and to the rural landscape setting identified in the Council's Landscape Character Assessment (2019). The proposal responds directly to the criteria set out in paragraph 135 of the NPPF and to the local design requirements of Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 and MDD Policies CC04 and TB21..

Residential Amenity

The proposal is single-storey and sited to the rear of the plot, well separated from the boundaries of neighbouring residential curtilages by the extensive garden area around the host dwelling. There are no first-floor windows and no overlooking or loss of privacy will

result. The ridge height of 5 metres is modest for a structure of this footprint and, given the separation to neighbouring dwellings, will not give rise to any overbearing effect, loss of light, or loss of outlook. The building contains no residential accommodation and will be used solely for purposes ancillary and incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse; there is no intensification of residential use at the property.

Parking and Highway Safety

The proposal provides a covered parking area together with ancillary storage, serving the existing dwelling (storage of lawn mowers and garden equipment). No change is proposed to the established vehicular access from Heath Ride and no additional traffic movements will be generated beyond those associated with the existing household. The proposal do not affect the existing off-street parking provision within the site. The proposal accords with Core Strategy Policy CP3 and MDD Policy CC07.

Biodiversity and Natural Environment

The site is not a designated wildlife site and lies outside any Site of Special Scientific Interest, Local Wildlife Site or Natura 2000 designation. It falls within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Linear Mitigation Zone, the Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone, the Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Model and the SSSI Impact Risk Zone. These are advisory data layers indicating that ecological matters should be considered; they are not of themselves constraints that prevent development.

The proposal involves no loss of trees, hedges or significant vegetation, no disturbance of watercourses, and no demolition of any building capable of supporting roosting bats. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA mitigation tariff engages net additional residential units and is not triggered by a non-residential outbuilding within an existing curtilage. On this basis the proposal presents no reasonable likelihood of harm to protected species or designated sites and offers opportunity through landscaping and retention of existing boundary vegetation for biodiversity net gain. The proposal accords with Core Strategy Policy CP7 and MDD Policies CC03 and TB23.

Conclusion

The proposal is for the erection of a domestic outbuilding within the established residential curtilage of Holly Tree House, Finchampstead. It is sensitively designed in a traditional oak-framed design, of modest scale relative to the plot, sympathetic to the rural-residential character of Heath Ride and to the wider landscape, and raises no material concerns of residential amenity, highway safety, landscape or biodiversity.

The proposal accords with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) and the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2023), and is sustainable development within the meaning of paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

For the above reasons, we see no reason for the Council to withhold planning permission and kindly request that the Council make a reasonable decision on this submission in line with the developmental objectives and timescales of the National Planning Policy Framework. Should the Planning Authority have any further questions in relation to this proposal or feel that certain conditions would be necessary to accommodate this proposal, Planning By Design would welcome conversation on any of these matters.