



Planning

Planning Statement

Client:

A Lucarelli

Pickeridge House

Sandhurst Road, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3JE

Change of use of an existing annexe to be used as an independent dwelling with associated curtilage

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the change of use of an existing annexe to be used as an independent dwelling with associated curtilage at Pickeridge Lodge, Sandhurst Road, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3JE.
- 1.2 This planning statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3 In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, and the following documents prepared by Bonney Architecture:
- 1:2500 Site Location Plan
 - 1:500 Block Plan
 - 1:200 Site Plan
 - Existing and Proposed Elevations
 - Existing and Proposed Floor Plans
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site is an ancillary annexe located to the north east of Pickeridge House which comprises a former pool building, Pickeridge Lodge, which is the focus of this application.
- 2.2 The annexe subject to this application was constructed in 1995 under permitted development and was formerly a pool house.
- 2.3 In 2016, an appeal was allowed and planning permission was granted for the alterations to facilitate the use of the original pool house as ancillary accommodation to the host dwelling.
- 2.4 The application site falls within the countryside.
- 2.5 The development site is large in size with a private driveway extending from Sandhurst Road, along the side of the main dwelling to the outbuilding at the rear.
- 2.6 The major development location of Wokingham is located to the west of the site.

3. Planning History

3.1 Application Ref: 160493 for alterations to pool house, including removal of pool, erection of porch, chimney & alterations to fenestration, for use as ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling. Allowed at appeal ref: APP/X0360/D/16/3159491 (**Appendix 1**) dated 22/11/2016.

3.2 Application Ref: 160493 householder application for the proposed alterations to pool house including removal of pool, erection of porch, chimney and alterations to fenestration, for use as ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling. Refused 05/08/2016.

3.3 Condition 4 of appeal decision APP/X0360/D/16/3159491 states that:

'The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as Pickeridge House, Sandhurst Road, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 3JE.'

Also of relevance to this application is Condition 5 which states that:

'The development hereby permitted shall not at any time create a separate curtilage from the main dwelling, known as Pickeridge House.'

3.4 This submission follows on from pre-application reference 252671 received on 10 December 2025.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 The National Design Guide (2019) identifies that “well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them. They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, taking into account factors such as the ageing population and cultural differences. They are adequate in size, fit for purpose and are adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants over time” (para 120-121).
- 4.2 Regarding the requirements of NPPG Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 14-029-20140306 in respect of Design and Access Statements, the proposal is described as follows:
- 4.3 **Use and Amount:** The proposed use is for the change of use of the existing annexe to 1 no. residential dwelling with associated curtilage.
- 4.4 **Layout and Scale:** The proposed development will utilise the existing built form, with no alterations required in order to facilitate the change of use.
- 4.5 **Landscaping:** The proposal will utilise the existing landscaping features on site which can be further supplemented by condition in the event of a grant of planning permission if required.
- 4.6 **Appearance:** The dwelling will utilise the existing built form.
- 4.7 **Access & Parking:** A driveway/parking area is detailed on the plans and can be used for car parking.

5. Policy Assessment

- 5.1 **National Guidance:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a relevant material consideration to the application.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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”.
- 5.4 Paragraph 61 confirms the Government’s objective to boost the supply of housing, and paragraph 8 identifies the three objectives of sustainable development, as economic, environmental and social.
- 5.5 Paragraph 131 identifies that “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”, whilst paragraph 139 states that significant weight should be given to “outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.”
- 5.6 The National Design Guide builds on the above, and clarifies that “well-designed neighbourhoods need to include an integrated mix of

tenures and housing types that reflect local housing need and market demand. They are designed to be inclusive and to meet the changing needs of people of different ages and abilities. New development reinforces existing places by enhancing local transport, facilities and community services, and maximising their potential use” (para 109).

5.7 **Principle of Development:** Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the Development Plan comprises the following documents:

- Core Strategy (CS) (2010)
- Managing Development Delivery (MDD) (2014)
- Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) (2022- 2038) (2023)

5.8 When considering the principle of development, the Council’s 5 Year Housing Land Supply is a key consideration.

5.9 According to NPPF paragraph 11(d), plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development:

‘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 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, 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.'

5.10 NPPF footnote 8 clarifies the meaning of 'out of date' in this context:

'This includes for all applications involving the provision of housing, situations where: the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 78); or where the Housing Delivery test indicate that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years.'

5.11 With a deliverable housing land supply of 1.7 years at present, applications such as this for the provision of housing are to be considered in the context of the tilted balance.

5.12 Planning case law, such as *Hallam Land Management Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government [2018] EWCA Civ 1808 (para. 47) ('Hallam') (CD5.16)*, has established that the extent of the housing shortfall has direct relevance to the degree of weight to be given within the tilted balance to the lack of housing supply in favour of granting permission. In this case, the shortfall is 1,403 dwellings. With the housing supply being substantially deficient, this accordingly emphasizes substantial weight to be provided to the supply of additional housing.

5.13 MDD Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.14 Policy CP09 of the Core Strategy states that development proposals within development limits will be acceptable in the limited

development location of Finchampstead. These developments must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location, together with their accessibility.

5.15 The site is located within the designated countryside and as such, is located outside of the defined settlement limits.

5.16 Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy states that in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted.

5.17 It is however acknowledged that the principle of the building being used for residential purposes has already been established and as such the correct policy thresholds of CP11 are outlined below:

2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and

3) It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or, in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement

5.18 The fundamental purpose of CP11 is, irrespective of the list of criteria stated within the policy, to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment.

5.19 Whilst the proposal site is identified as falling within the countryside and outside of the defined settlement, the character of the area is established as being semi-rural by virtue of other detached dwellings set in large plots nearby.

5.20 Furthermore, the proposal utilises an existing building and as such the proposal is not considered to lead to any encroachment or expansion of development into the countryside.

- 5.21 Notwithstanding this, CS Policy CP11 is considered to be out of date. Allowed appeal Decision Ref (**Appendix 2**): APP/X0360/W/24/3354667 is therefore of relevance. The application sought for outline application with all matters reserved except for access for the proposed erection of up to 350 dwellings (Use Class C3) and care home (Use Class C2) at land adjacent to Blagrove Road, Wokingham, RG41 4AX. At paragraph 11 of the decision, the Inspector states that:

'CS Policy CP11 restricts development in the countryside to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment. None of the stated exceptions apply in CS Policy CP11 to the proposal, but the policy provides some flexibility due to the phrase 'will not normally be permitted'. To my mind this allows a decision-maker to come to judgement about a proposal where it broadly meets the exceptions but not wholly yet still achieves the policy's purpose.'

- 5.22 Furthermore, at paragraph 15, the Inspector states that:

'The housing requirement has now considerably increased compared to CS Policy CP17, and it is inconsistent with the Framework's aim of significantly boosting the supply of housing and meeting an area's identifies housing need. By extension MDD Policy CC02 and CS Policies CP9 and CP11 are also inconsistent with the Framework as they limit where development can go based on delivering the housing requirement in CS Policy CP17. Hence, this affects where the housing required to meet a higher level could potentially go.'

- 5.23 This is elaborated on further in paragraph 16 which states that:

'The purposes of CS Policies CP9 and CP11 are to identify appropriate and sustainable areas of development that are well located for facilities and services, to protect the identity of settlements, and

maintain the quality of the environment. These purposes are consistent with the aims of the Framework. However, despite recent Housing Delivery Test performances, the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The latest agreed position is a supply of 1.7 years, which has decision-making consequences that I shall come to later, in that the most important policies for determining this application are deemed to be out of date.'

- 5.24 Whereby, CS Policies CP9 and CP11 are demonstrated to restrict the delivery of housing at the level that is required, they are found to be inconsistent with the Framework's objectives to meet Wokingham's identified needs.
- 5.25 Given the above, the provision of 1no. net dwelling in this location should be afforded substantial weight in light of the 1.7-year housing land supply, with the provision of this dwelling providing a modest yet valuable contribution.
- 5.26 With regard to the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan, further to the points detailed above about the acceptability of this development in a countryside setting, the site is not located within a defined local gap (see Figure 1 below). FNP Policy GS1 states that development proposals should respond positively to the identification of the key local gaps and green wedges.

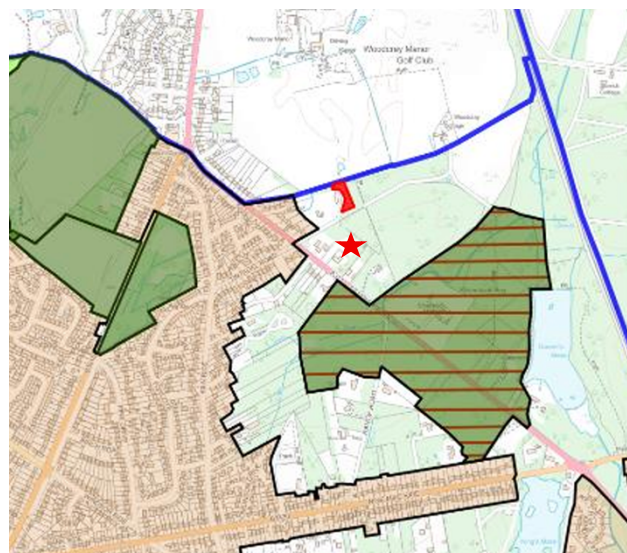


Figure 1 – Policy GS1 Map from Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan showing site marked by red star

- 5.27 Development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they would not unacceptably affect the function of the gap or wedge, and/or not unacceptably reduce the physical and visual separation of settlements, or distinct parts of a settlement concerned.
- 5.28 Given the site is not located within a defined local gap and utilises existing built form, this is considered acceptable.
- 5.29 In relation to the associated curtilage that is proposed to be created for the new dwelling, it is important to re-consider the points raised in CS Policy CP11. Paragraph 9 of appeal ref. APP/X0360/W/21/3288075 (**Appendix 3**) states that *'in policy terms, Policy CP11 of the Council's Core Strategy says that, subject to exceptions, development proposals in the countryside will not "normally" be permitted. Whilst the development does not fall squarely within any of the prescribed exceptions, there is no blanket on development in such locations, and the development would still broadly align with the Policy's objectives of preserving the separate identity of settlements and maintaining the quality of the environment.'*
- 5.30 Looking at this through the lens of appeal ref. APP/X0360/D/16/3159491 which established the site's lawful use. Paragraph 10 of the appeal decision states that *'the Council's main concern in this regard relates to the scheme forming an example of backland development that would be contrary to the prevailing character of the area. However, as I have set out above, the proposal would appear ancillary to the main dwelling. Further, a planning condition can be imposed that restricts a separate curtilage from being created for the proposed scheme. This would ensure that the scheme did not appear as backland development and that there*

would be no significant visual changes from what exists at the current time.'

- 5.31 Referring back to the points details in Paragraphs 5.25 – 5.28 above, the “visual effects” are not considered to be harmful given the site has not been identified to be within a local green wedge. In addition to this, the development would utilise existing built form and a large curtilage would not be indifferent to the comparative plot sizes in the surrounding area.
- 5.32 Lastly, Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan seeks to avoid inappropriate development of residential gardens where there is harm to the local area. Permission would only be granted where there is a positive contribution to the built form and surrounding spaces, integration with the layout of the surrounding area, appropriate hard and soft landscaping, amenity space, building separation and compatibility with the general building height.
- 5.33 R22 of the Borough Design Guide SPD also notes that back land development must not harm the existing character of the local area, it should relate positively to the existing layout and urban form, maintain the quality of environment for existing residents, and create a satisfactory living environment.
- 5.34 The proposed development would utilise existing built form and further landscaping could be secured by condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.35 The set back nature of the development is akin to other development in the surrounding area including at Tintagel Farm Close and so would not appear incongruous in the prevailing character.
- 5.36 For the reasons detailed above, the proposed development is considered acceptable.

- 5.37 **Character and Appearance of the Area:** CS Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character of the area. Furthermore, MDD Policy TB05 states that 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.
- 5.38 Sandhurst Road is characterised by large, sporadically spaced detached dwellings set within generous plots with driveway access, parking and rear gardens.
- 5.39 Dwellings along Sandhurst Road vary in architectural styles but typically comprise red brick or white render with detached garages. The dwellings along the road are well screened from each other owing to extensive mature landscaping along the road.
- 5.40 Whilst the design and siting of the proposed dwelling have already been approved, the proposal is nonetheless considered to be sited sensitively to both the host dwelling and neighbouring dwellings, with a significant distance as to avoid any potential overlooking, overbearing or privacy concerns.
- 5.41 Furthermore, the site benefits from extensive landscape screening between the host dwelling and the proposal as well as from the highway, therefore protecting the existing established character of the area.
- 5.42 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.' Whereby the proposal site comprises an existing dwelling, and the

annexe subject to this application, the principle of residential dwellings in this location has already been established.

- 5.43 As such, the proposal is not considered to be detrimental to the existing rural character of the area in accordance with CS Policy CP3, MDD Policy TB05 and FNP Policy D2.
- 5.44 **Residential Amenity:** CS Policy CP3 seeks to ensure that development has no detriment upon the amenities of neighbouring dwellings. The proposed dwelling is sited comfortably within the plot, set back further from Pickeridge House to the south with a separation distance of 37m.
- 5.45 Internally, the dwelling has been afforded maximum daylight and sunlight provision, with large windows provided at each elevation.
- 5.46 Externally, the dwelling benefits from a substantial wrap around garden concentrated predominantly to the south. The dwelling also benefits from existing extensive landscaping and garage space.
- 5.47 Whilst the curtilage of Pickeridge House will be sub-divided as part of this application, the 11 m of garden space requirement in the Wokingham Design Guide SPD will be maintained. Similarly, the proposed dwelling will also maintain a back-to-back garden depth of over 11 m.
- 5.48 **Trees and Landscaping:** The proposal will not lead to any alterations to existing landscaping across the site and can be further supplemented in the event of a future grant of planning permission.
- 5.49 **Transport and Parking:** The site benefits from an existing access taken from the north of Sandhurst Road, with a driveway that wraps around the left of Pickeridge House to the rear.

5.50 Policy CP6 – Managing Travel Demand which states that planning permission will be granted for schemes which (inter alia):

"d) provide appropriate vehicular parking, having regard to car ownership

e) mitigate any adverse effects upon the local and strategic transport network that arise from the development proposed."

5.51 The proposed dwelling is afforded private car parking spaces for several cars within or to the front of the garage.

5.52 The level of increase in vehicular movements is not considered to be significant over and above the existing vehicular movements associated with the annexe. In line with the NPPF, the 'residual cumulative impacts on the road network' would not be severe or exacerbate a location where there are no existing road safety concerns.

5.53 Furthermore, at paragraph 13 of appeal ref: APP/X0360/D/16/3159491 the Inspector states that:

'It has been set out that the main dwelling would be occupied by the appellant's daughter, her husband and two children. Along with the appellants, there would be six occupants on-site. Given that the main dwelling has five bedrooms it would not be unreasonable to consider that if the property was sold in the future, the main dwelling could be occupied by a similar number of total occupants, which would generate a similar number of vehicle trips.' As such, there is an existing fall back in terms of highways movements.

5.54 Whereby the annexe currently accommodates four people, it is not anticipated that the proposal would result in a significant number of occupants over and above the existing situation.

- 5.55 **Cycle Provision:** The proposal can accommodate secure storage for the safe keeping of bicycles within the garage. This can be secured by condition in the event of a grant of planning permission.
- 5.56 **Refuse Provision:** The waste collection strategy is to remain the same as the existing arrangements for the annexe.
- 5.57 **Drainage and SuDS:** The site is located in Flood Zone 1 – the lowest risk of flooding. As such, a Flood Risk Assessment is unlikely to be required.
- 5.58 **Contamination:** The site is not known to be contaminated, and this is unlikely due to the residential use of the site. If contamination concerns are raised during the course of the application, these can be controlled by condition.
- 5.59 **Ecology:** The proposed development does not involve any alterations to the existing roofline of the annexe and as such, a bat survey is unlikely to be required.
- 5.60 Additionally, due to the application being change of use from an annexe to a residential dwelling, no habitat is being impacted. Therefore, the development is considered to qualify under the ‘de minimus’ exemption within the BNG regulations.
- 5.61 Ecological enhancements can be secured by condition in the event of a grant of planning permission if this is deemed necessary.
- 5.62 For the reasons detailed above, the proposed development is considered to accord with CS Policy CP7: Biodiversity and MDD Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development.
- 5.63 **Special Protection Area:** The appeal site lies within 5KM of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

- 5.64 In accordance with Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy, new dwellings are expected to provide mitigation to ensure that individually or in combination with other projects, they would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA.
- 5.65 SANG and SAMM contributions can be secured by legal agreement in the event of a grant of planning permission, allowing the application to accord with CS Policy CP8.
- 5.66 **Affordable Housing:** The site is not liable for affordable housing in line with the triggers outlined in CS Policy CP5.
- 5.67 **Community Infrastructure Levy:** The relevant forms have been submitted in support of this application.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land.
- 6.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered the proposed development would constitute a high-quality dwelling without adverse effect on the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 6.3 Given the Council's lack of a 5 Year Housing Land Supply, the provision of 1 no. dwelling is considered to carry increased weight in the overall planning balance.
- 6.4 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National

Guidance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

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