

ET Planning

Client:

Stuart Williams

Elmlands

Little Hill Road, Hurst,
Reading, RG10 0TG

Full Planning Application

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the change of use of part of the existing paddock to residential curtilage, alongside the erection of a detached leisure outbuilding and installation of ground-mounted photovoltaic panels at Elmlands, Little Hill Road, Hurst.
- 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 Aves Architectural:
- 26 - 05 Outbuilding at Elmlands WORKING-BLOCK PLAN (Scale 1:500)
 - 26 - 05 Outbuilding at Elmlands WORKING-SITE PLAN B (Scale 1:200)
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site is an established residential property set within a large plot. The site comprises of a dwelling, existing outbuildings, garden area and adjoining paddock land. Access to the site is taken directly from Little Hill Road, a winding country road parallel to the A329.
- 2.2 The paddock sits immediately adjacent to the domestic curtilage and is contained within a well-defined site boundary. The property with the associated outbuildings lies centralised to the wider plot, comprising of a large area of hardstanding gravel. The land forms part of the wider countryside setting, complimenting the wider area in a discreet manner.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Application Ref 252662: Householder application for the proposed single storey rear extension replacing conservatory, single storey side extension and changes to, fenestration. Approved (12th January 2026).
- 3.2 Application Ref 222110: Householder application for the proposed insertion of 2no. additional dormers to the existing roof, the addition of a roof light, plus the erection of a rear balcony to first floor, and changes to, fenestration. Approved (19th August 2022).
- 3.3 Application Ref 210778: Householder application for the proposed erection of garage, two carports and machinery store following demolition of existing garage. Approved (18th May 2021).

- 3.4 Application Ref 121390: Proposed erection of a single storey front porch extension, front dormer window extensions and raising of roof infill section to create additional access, plus new door to side, dwelling. Approved (19th October 2012).

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 The proposed development comprises of three elements:
- 4.2 **Change of use of part of the existing paddock to residential curtilage.** The grassed area located to the north-west of the site will exist to be in association with the existing dwelling. It will be developed on to contain an outbuilding used as a gym and plant outbuilding, a ≈600sqm fruit tree orchard and grass lawn with a ground source heat pump system. Despite being developed on, this section of the site will still retain green features through the orchard.
- 4.3 **Erection of detached leisure outbuilding.** The proposed outbuilding will be a single, detached domestic leisure building located to the west of the existing building situated on the transformed paddock area. The floor plan reveals the outbuilding will come with a gymnasium, WC, games room, store and bar area. The elevations show a traditionally proportioned building with a pitched roof, stained timber boarding, plain clay tiles and powder-coated aluminium doors and windows.
- 4.4 **Ground-mounted photovoltaic panels.** These solar panels will provide renewable energy for the property and will be positioned within the site and can be easily installed. The submitted AIKO datasheet identifies high-efficiency photovoltaic modules, with the Neostar 3S54 module range providing outputs between 465W and 495W, and the 495W module achieving a stated efficiency of 24.8%.



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. 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”.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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.”

- 5.5 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).
- 5.6 **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.
- 5.7 In this context, the relevant Development Plan to refer to is:
 - Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2010
- 5.8 As part of this development plan, **Policy CP1 – Sustainable Development** ensures planning permission will be granted if the development maintains a high-quality environment, while minimising pollutants and contributing towards zero-carbon developments. The development at hand aims to create a high-quality development environment with slick, modern finishes specifically for the outbuildings. The installation of ground solar panels ensures the use of clean energy is in order, aligning with CP1 by using appropriate on-site renewable energy features.
- 5.9 **Policy CP3 – General Principles of Development** states planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate

mass, scale and height, using the full potential of the site and contributing to the sense of place. The outbuildings are designed to be one storey in height, minimizing its visual appearance and complimenting the semi-rural character of the area. The proposed development is set to transform the whole use of the site outlined in red on the provided plans, from a solely residential use to a mixture of residential, leisure and agricultural, with associated solar panels for the site. These proposed designs are set to be merged into a functional scheme that is complimented with each element, having minimal impacts upon ecological and landscape features.

- 5.10 Due to the development being situated outside of development limits, **Policy CP11 - Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside)** applies with the aim to maintain the quality of the environment. The policy discourages proposals outside of development limits but states its exceptions. Relevant to this proposal, the proposed design promotes the enjoyment of the countryside, through the addition of the gym facilities and garden area. This will provide a heightened experience for residents by providing easy access to leisure facilities within the vicinity. The development also does not lead to excessive encroachment of the countryside, lying within the boundary of the resident's owned space. Therefore, the proposed development is liable outside of development limits.
- 5.11 **Green Belt:** The site is not located within the Green Belt.
- 5.12 **Character and Appearance of the Area:** The site is located just inside the countryside boundary, lying just outside the north-eastern edge of Winnersh, Reading. The proposal has been carefully designed to preserve the character and appearance of the semi-rural area. Elmlands is set within a spacious residential plot of land along Little Hill Road, with Littlewood to the West and Sangraee across the road

being the neighbouring properties in close proximity to Elmlands. All three plots are vast with established grassed areas, trees, existing outbuildings and a gravel driveway.

- 5.13 In terms of the proposal, the detached outbuilding would have a domestic and rural character, using a pitched roof form, plain clay tiles and stained timber boarding, all appropriate to its setting. Materials and design are carefully and specifically chosen to represent a sympathetic ancillary structure rather than an intrusive, urbanising feature.
- 5.14 The change of use of part of the paddock area will not result in the wholesale domestication of the wider paddock, but would remain open and landscaped, while the proposed Orchard would help reinforce the verdant character of the site.
- 5.15 The ground-mounted photovoltaic panels would be low-level, functional features, which will be appropriately sited to ensure their visual prominence will be limited.
- 5.16 **Residential Amenity:** As previously mentioned, Elmlands is neighboured by Littlewood adjacent and Sangraee across the road. All three spaces lie in an open parcel of land encompassed by large, mature trees.
- 5.17 The proposal would not result in any unacceptable harm to the residential amenity to neighbouring occupiers. The development would be domestic in scale and height, therefore preventing any sense of overlooking or obtrusion. The outbuilding will exist in open, spacious ground of the existing property, with enough separation from neighbouring residents to avoid any overbearing impacts, while the proposed arrangement of windows and doors would not give rise to loss of privacy.

- 5.18 In terms of the ground-mounted photovoltaic panels, these will not generate noise, disturbance or loss of light. Their sole purpose is to provide renewable energy for the existing dwelling, lying low-level and is a much more indistinguishable compared to other renewable energy sources.
- 5.19 Overall, the development would be compatible with the existing residential use of the site and would preserve the privacy for the neighbouring occupiers of Littlewood and Sangraee.
- 5.20 **Transport and Parking:** Transport and parking will not be directly affected by the development, due to the existing parking spaces and driveway being untouched.
- 5.21 **Drainage and SuDS:** Despite the change of use to the paddock land, no substantial natural soakaway land will be lost as a result of the development.
- 5.22 **Sustainability and Energy:** Paragraph 8 of the NPPF supports the transition of development to a low carbon future. The national Code for Sustainable Homes has now been abolished, however it is proposed that the development would conform to Part L of the Building Regulations which as of 2022 requires a 30% reduction than current standards. By way of contributing to the reduction in carbon, the proposal would also achieve current building construction standards with added sustainability measures through;
- A. The limitation of the amount of inherent material, structure and embodied energy through the employment of good building standards to create an excellent SAP rating;
 - B. Maximizing the use of natural light through floor-ceiling windows;

- C. Refuse, recycling and composting facilities to be provided to work with the Council's existing waste and recycling collection service;
- D. 'A' rated electrical appliances and energy saving light fittings;
- E. 'A' rated double glazed windows with natural cross ventilation provision;
- F. Water butts fitted to the rainwater down pipes for watering the garden;
- G. Recycling of waste construction materials where practicable;
- H. Permeable driveway/parking spaces to avoid increase in surface water runoff;

5.23 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with sustainability objectives in this respect.

5.24 **Ecology:** A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has also been prepared by EDM Planning-Ecology, comprising a UK Habitat Classification survey, protected and notable species appraisal and an assessment of ecological connectivity with surrounding habitats.

5.25 The current site comprises vegetated garden, modified grassland, hardstanding, gravel driveway, patio areas, ruderal margins, hedgerows, scrub edges, scattered trees and young orchard planting. The PEA identifies the principal ecological features as the retained native hedgerows, boundary trees, scrub margins and orchard planting, with the more intensively managed garden, driveway, hardstanding and patio areas being of lower ecological value.

5.26 Modified grassland/vegetated garden covers the majority of the site, with hardstanding associated with the access and existing buildings, native hedgerows around most site boundaries, scattered individual

trees, bramble scrub beyond the borders and a newly planted traditional orchard to the east of the site. The native hedgerows are described as being predominantly formed of bramble, hawthorn, blackthorn, ash, oak, beech and elm.

- 5.27 No statutory or non-statutory designated nature conservation sites are present within the application site, and the PEA concludes that significant effects on designated sites are not anticipated. Priority habitats are present within the wider area, including deciduous woodland approximately 90 metres to the south-west and traditional orchard approximately 125 metres to the north-east. A newly planted traditional orchard comprising apple and plum trees is also present to the east of the site within land owned by the applicant and is included as part of the current proposal.
- 5.28 The PEA identifies limited suitability for most protected species, with potential interest largely associated with hedgerows, scrub margins, trees, garden margins and orchard planting. No direct evidence of protected species, such as badger setts, great crested newt ponds or owl pellets, was recorded during the survey.
- 5.29 No ponds, ditches or other aquatic habitats suitable for breeding great crested newt or other amphibians are present within the application site. Off-site waterbodies are separated from the site by roads, managed land and fragmented habitat, and the PEA concludes that no further amphibian survey is required, subject to precautionary working measures. The site offers low suitability for reptiles and hedgehogs, primarily within hedgerow bases, scrub margins, longer grassland edges and refugial material. No badger setts or field signs were recorded, and no suitable habitat for otter or water vole is present. Bird interest is likely to be limited to common species using trees, hedgerows, scrub, garden vegetation and orchard planting for nesting and foraging.

- 5.30 **BNG:** A Biodiversity Net Gain Statement and statutory biodiversity metric have been prepared in support of the application, confirming that the proposed development site covers approximately **3,488sqm**, with an additional **702sqm BNG area** to the north. The existing site is classified as a mixture of hardstanding, vegetated garden, native hedgerows and individual trees.
- 5.31 The baseline habitats within the red line comprise of **1,247sqm of hardstanding, 2,241sqm of vegetated garden, 94 metres of native hedgerow** and **four individual trees**, formed of three medium trees and one small tree. The additional BNG area to the north comprises **702sqm of vegetated garden** and **78 metres of native hedgerow**.
- 5.32 The statement highlights some degradation occurring evidenced through satellite imagery, including loss of vegetated garden habitat due to hardstanding and the loss of a medium mature tree (in poor condition) plus a small urban-style tree within the hardstanding/parking access area. The baseline date has therefore been set to the date immediately before those activities took place, identified as May 2025.
- 5.33 The post-developed site would comprise of **1,716sqm of hardstanding, 1,771sqm of vegetated garden, 114 metres of native hedgerow**, of which **100 metres would be retained**, and **2 individual rural trees**, both of which were already planted one year in advance. The additional 702sqm BNG area to the north would comprise traditional orchard, also planted one year in advance, together with 78 metres of retained native hedgerow.
- 5.34 No further tree planting is required beyond the two individual rural trees planted in advance and the traditional orchard within the additional BNG area. New and retained native hedgerow will exist

post-development, as well as retained individual trees, the two already-planted individual rural trees, vegetated garden, hardstanding, and the adjacent traditional orchard as the relevant post-development habitats.

- 5.35 The proposal within the red line has an area habitat unit baseline of 0.81 units and a linear habitat unit baseline of 0.40 units. The red line post-development would provide **0.64 area habitat units** and **0.47 linear habitat units**. The additional northern BNG area has an area habitat unit baseline of **0.14 units** and a linear habitat unit baseline of **0.29 units**, increasing post-development to **0.41 area habitat units**, while retaining **0.29 linear habitat units**.
- 5.36 The BNG Statement concludes that the proposal meets the statutory **10% biodiversity net gain target**. Area-based units would increase by **12.61%**, and linear-based units would improve by **16.74%**. The BNG Statement also confirms that the relevant trading rules are satisfied.

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.
- 6.3 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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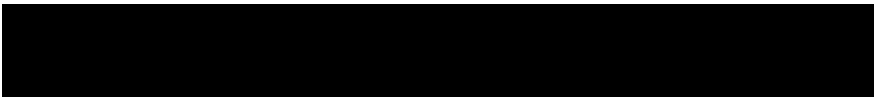
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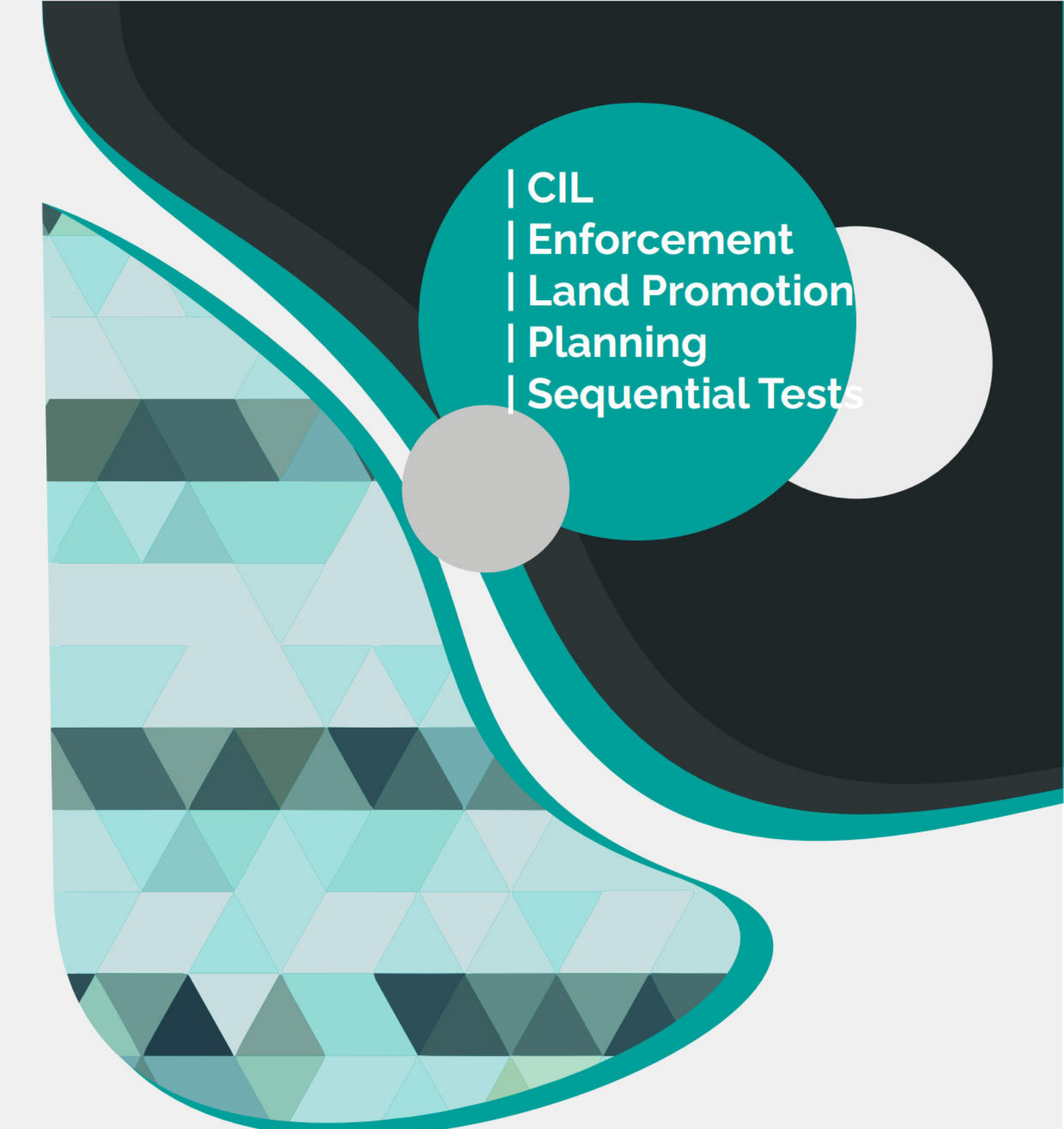
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