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Revised Planning Statement

7 Lanark Close, Woodley, Reading RG5 4DF

Proposed change of use of amenity land to residential garden, erection of new boundary fence and removal of part of existing garden wall

Application 262427

1. Purpose and scope

This revised statement accompanies the full planning application and responds specifically to Item 4 of Wokingham Borough Council's validation letter dated 14 October 2026. It explains the proposal in its site context, identifies relevant national and local planning policy, and addresses known nearby planning history. It should be read alongside the application drawings, arboricultural assessment and site-specific great crested newt information submitted separately.

2. Site and existing circumstances

No. 7 is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling on a corner plot at Lanark Close and Colemans Moor Road, within an established residential area. A strip of open amenity land lies adjacent to the existing garden, separated from it by a brick boundary wall. The applicant states that the land is within the same registered ownership as the dwelling. The strip contains shrubs and trees and is currently visible from the adjoining street. Private ownership does not, by itself, establish that the land already has lawful residential garden use or that its loss as open amenity land is acceptable.

3. Proposed development

The application seeks permission to change the use of the adjoining amenity strip to private residential garden, remove the relevant section of existing garden wall, and erect a new boundary fence along the enlarged garden perimeter. The proposed fence is approximately 2 metres high, with brown composite panels and aluminium posts, as described in the original submission. The final fence alignment, materials and elevations should correspond precisely with the submitted scaled plans. Existing planting and trees are to be retained where practicable; any proposed tree removal or replacement is subject to the arboricultural evidence, Tree Preservation Order controls and the Council's determination. No assumption is made here that a protected tree may be removed without the necessary consent.

4. National planning policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires determination in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as applicable at the date of determination, is a material consideration. Its overarching approach supports sustainable development, well-designed places, protection of local character, and conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. The proposal is small in scale and introduces no new dwelling or traffic-generating use. Nevertheless, enclosure of a presently open

landscaped strip requires a balanced assessment of streetscape character, the value of green infrastructure, existing trees and potential protected species. The applicant's case is that a sensitively designed boundary and retained landscape features can integrate the strip with the established residential plot without unacceptable effects; that conclusion depends upon the detailed drawings and technical reports.

5. Adopted local development plan

The adopted Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) and Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan (2014) form the principal local policy framework, alongside any applicable neighbourhood plan. Core Strategy Policy CP1 addresses sustainable development, CP3 addresses general principles of development including design and amenity, and CP7 addresses biodiversity. MDD Policy CC03 concerns green infrastructure, trees and landscaping, including retention of trees and hedges and avoidance of fragmentation of green infrastructure. MDD Policies TB21 (landscape character) and TB23 (biodiversity and development) are also relevant to the extent applicable to this site and proposal. The following assessment is proportionate to the modest development proposed.

5.1 Design, character and public amenity

The proposed fence would replace the existing open edge of the amenity strip with a defined private boundary. Its 2-metre height is comparable with the existing garden wall described in the submitted statement, but its position on the outer perimeter would make it more prominent from the public realm. Brown composite panels and aluminium posts can provide a consistent finish, although a long uninterrupted fence could create a visually hard edge. Retention of suitable trees and shrubs, an appropriate setback where feasible, and landscaping along the street-facing side should therefore be considered to soften the enclosure. The proposal's compliance with CP3 and relevant design and landscape policies depends on these details and the actual effect on the street scene; it should not be assumed that the loss of visible amenity space is negligible.

5.2 Trees, landscaping and biodiversity

The Council has identified a Tree Preservation Order tree and a mapped red/amber great crested newt risk zone. The application must therefore be assessed in light of the separately prepared arboricultural information and site-specific great crested newt risk statement. A waterbody connected with the River Loddon has been identified within approximately 300 metres, while intervening roads and housing may reduce terrestrial connectivity. Those barriers do not conclusively exclude newt movement or eliminate the need for proportionate ecological assessment. Any excavation, vegetation clearance, tree works, root protection measures, avoidance methods or licensing requirements should be agreed through the appropriate technical evidence and planning process. Subject to satisfactory safeguards, the proposal seeks to maintain a landscaped edge and avoid unacceptable harm under CP7, CC03 and TB23.

5.3 Residential amenity and highway considerations

No new building accommodation is proposed. The fence itself is not expected to cause significant overlooking or overshadowing, but its relationship with nearby properties and the highway must be assessed against the submitted elevations and layout. The application does not propose alterations to vehicular access. The Council should be satisfied that the new fence does not obstruct pedestrian visibility, highway sightlines, public access or any adopted highway land. These matters should be confirmed by the scaled boundary drawing rather than inferred solely from ownership.

6. Emerging planning policy

Wokingham's Local Plan Update 2023–2040 was submitted for examination in February 2025 and remained unadopted as at November 2026, with modifications anticipated. Relevant emerging design and environmental provisions may be material considerations, with weight determined under national policy according to their stage of preparation, unresolved objections and consistency with the NPPF. They do not displace the adopted development plan. The separate Local Plan 2045 is at an early scoping stage and does not yet provide an adopted policy basis for this decision.

7. Planning history and neighbouring context

The applicant has drawn attention to a comparable boundary-treatment proposal at 177 Colemans Moor Road. Publicly indexed records identify Wokingham application 261104, described as relocation of existing boundary treatment and erection of a 2.0-metre-high fence set back from the highway. The indexed sources consulted contain inconsistent decision-status information; the Council's official decision notice should be checked before this application is relied upon as an approved precedent. Even if permission has been granted, its relevance will depend on differences in land use, boundary alignment, protected trees, visibility and landscape context. No definitive planning history for No. 7 has been established from the material supplied; the Council is invited to consider its own records.

8. Planning balance and conclusion

The proposal offers a modest extension of usable private garden space within land stated to be in the applicant's ownership, with no additional dwelling or intensification of residential occupation. Potential benefits include clearer responsibility for maintenance and an orderly boundary treatment. Against these benefits, the Council must weigh the enclosure of presently open amenity land, the change in the street scene, protection of the TPO tree and any great crested newt risk. Subject to an acceptable fence design and alignment, retention or appropriate replacement of landscape features where authorised, and satisfactory arboricultural and ecological safeguards, the proposal is considered capable of according with the relevant national and adopted local policy objectives. Planning permission is respectfully requested, subject to the Council's assessment of the complete application and supporting evidence.

9. Documents and sources

Application documents: original Planning Statement (September 2026); Wokingham Borough Council invalid application letter (14 October 2026); submitted or forthcoming drawings, arboricultural report and Great Crested Newt Statement. Public policy sources: Wokingham Borough Council adopted development plan and MDD Local Plan; Wokingham Local Plan Update examination pages; National Planning Policy Framework. Nearby application record: Wokingham application 261104 (decision status to be verified).

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