

CONTENTS	PAGE
1.0 INTRODUCTION	3
2.0 SITE CONTEXT	5
3.0 PLANNING HISTORY	6
4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	7
5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	8
6.0 DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: USE, AMOUNT & SCALE OF THE DEVELOPMENT	17
7.0 LAYOUT, DESIGN & APPEARANCE	20
8.0 ACCESS & CAR PARKING PROVISION	23
9.0 ECOLOGY	24
10.0 CONCLUSIONS	26

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This planning statement has been prepared by Atelier T&B Limited ('Atelier T&B') on behalf of Mr & Mrs Manning in support of a full planning application made to Wokingham Borough Council ('Wokingham Council') relating to the site at 149 Victoria Road, Wargrave, Reading, RG10 8AG ('the site').

1.2 Planning permission is sought for the construction of a detached single storey dwelling, double garage and associated works at 149 Victoria Road, Wargrave, Reading, RG10 8AG.

1.4 The description of development is:

"Demolition of existing 3-bedroom 2-storey dwelling and associated outbuildings and erection of a detached single storey dwelling and double garage with new landscaping and associated works."

1.5 The principal purpose of the Planning Statement is to test compliance of the proposals for residential development against prevailing national and local planning policy and guidance.

1.6 This statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

a. All Plans, Drawings & Visualisations by Atelier T&B

b. Design and Access Statement by Atelier T&B:

- i. Site & Context
- ii. Constraints & Opportunities
- iii. Existing Plans & Elevations
- iv. Proposed Site Plan
- v. Proposed Height & Massing
- vi. Elevation/Materiality
- vii. Proposed Plans & Elevations
- viii. Access Strategy

ix. Landscape Strategy

c. Surface Water Drainage Statement:

i. Introduction

ii. Site Context

iii. Surface Water Drainage Strategy

iv. Foul Water Drainage Strategy

d. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment by Arbtech

e. Topographic and Tree Survey by Meridian Surveys Limited

Structure of Planning Statement

1.7 The supporting Planning Statement sets out the detail of the proposal which is described and appraised having regard to the following aspects:

- **Section 2 – Site Context**
- **Section 3 – Planning History**
- **Section 4 – The Proposed Development**
- **Section 5 – Planning Policy Context**
- **Section 6 – Use, Amount & Scale of the Development**
- **Section 7 – Layout, Design & Appearance**
- **Section 8 – Access & Car Parking Provision**
- **Section 9 – Ecology**
- **Section 10 – Conclusions**

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

Site Location and Description

- 2.1 149 Victoria Road is located within a residential street in the village of Wargrave, which lies in the civil parish of Wargrave, Wokingham Borough, Berkshire. The site is situated to the east of the village centre, accessed from School Lane, and benefits from close proximity to a range of local services and facilities including shops, schools, and community amenities.
- 2.2 The property is located within Wargrave, which is identified by Wokingham Borough Council as a *Modest Development Location*. This designation supports small-scale, sustainable growth within established settlements.
- 2.3 The site is well served by sustainable transport connections. Wargrave railway station, on the Henley Branch Line, is within walking distance and provides direct services to Twyford, with onward connections to London Paddington and the wider national rail network. By road, the settlement has convenient access to the A4 and A404(M), offering direct links to Reading, Maidenhead, and the South East region more generally.
- 2.4 Victoria Road is characterised by residential development, with a mixture of detached and semi-detached properties generally set back from the street. The area forms part of a well-established settlement pattern, where dwellings are of a comparable scale and contribute to a coherent residential environment.
- 2.5 The prevailing character of the built form is defined by traditional brick properties dating from the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods. However, more recent infill and replacement development is also evident, which has introduced a variety of architectural styles into the street scene while maintaining its overall residential character.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 A review of Wokingham Borough Council's online planning register has been undertaken for 149 Victoria Road. This search has not identified any relevant planning applications or consents associated with the property. It is therefore considered that the site does not have a recent or material planning history of relevance to the current proposal.

4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Full planning permission is sought for:

“Demolition of existing 2-storey 3 bedroom dwelling and associated outbuildings and erection of a detached single storey dwelling and garage with new hardstanding, landscaping, and associated works.”

4.2 The proposal comprises the following elements:

- Erection of new single storey dwelling;
- New hardstanding;
- Cycle storage provision for 2+ cycle spaces;
- Provision of parking spaces for 6+ vehicles with one Electric Vehicle Charging Point and electric bicycle charging point;
- New bin storage area;
- Associated landscaping.

4.3 The full proposal is outlined in the accompanying Design & Access Statement.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 The Development Plan in this case is comprised of the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF December 2023)
- Horsham District Planning Statement (adopted November 2015)
- Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) (2021)
- Planning Advice Note(s) (PAN)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

5.3 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and Wales and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF should be read as a whole.

5.4 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF sets out that ***'Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements'***.

5.5 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

5.6 Paragraph 8 states achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has the following three overarching objectives which are independent but need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:

- a) ***'an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure***
- b) ***a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and health communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future***

generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities health, social and cultural well-being; and

- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy’.*

- 5.7 Paragraph 10 states *‘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 11). For decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay’.*
- 5.8 Where there are no relevant development plan policies or the relevant policies are out of date, the NPPF states at paragraph 11 that the planning permission should be granted unless the policies of the Framework indicate otherwise or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework considered as a whole.
- 5.9 Paragraph 12 of the Framework states that *‘The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed’.*
- 5.10 In terms of decision-making, the Framework states at paragraph 38 that *‘Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principal, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible’.*
- 5.11 Paragraph 60 states *‘To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a*

sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay’.

- 5.12 Paragraph 83 states ***‘To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby’.***
- 5.13 Paragraph 108 requires transport issues to be considered at the early stages of plan-making and development proposals. This is to ensure that (inter alia) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed.
- 5.14 Paragraph 111 states that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account the accessibility of the development, its type, mix and use, the availability of land and opportunities for public transport, local car ownership levels and the need to ensure that adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport.
- 5.15 In assessing development proposals, paragraph 114 states that it should be ensured that there are appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes, that there is a safe and suitable access to the site (for all road users) and that any significant impacts on the transport network or on highway safety terms can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 5.16 Paragraph 115 makes it clear that ***‘Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual impacts on the road network would be severe’.***
- 5.17 Paragraph 123 of the Framework states that ***‘Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions’.***

- 5.18 Paragraph 131 states that the ***‘creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable in communities’.***
- 5.19 Paragraph 135 states that ***‘Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:***
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;***
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;***
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);***
 - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;***
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and***
 - f) 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 and where crime and disorder, and fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience’.***
- 5.20 Paragraph 139 states that ***‘Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely , significant weight should be given to:***
- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or***
 - b) 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.'

The National Planning Practice Guidance

- 5.21 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) website was launched on 6 March 2014. It replaced and consolidates 7,000 pages of planning guidance on topics including flood risk, heritage and design and it should be read in conjunction with the NPPF as it is continually updated.

Local Planning Policy

The development plan for the site comprises the Wokingham Adopted Core Strategy DPD (Adopted January 2010) and the Wokingham Management Development Delivery Local Plan (Adopted February 2014).

Wokingham Core Strategy (CS) (2010)

- 5.22 ***Policy CP1 – Sustainable Development*** – sets out the Council's position with respect to sustainable development. It sets out a list of criteria for development which includes the following; maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment, minimise the emissions of pollutants into the environment, provision of water resources and adequate drainage, minimise the consumption and use of resources, avoid areas of best and most versatile agricultural land, avoid areas where pollution may impact upon the amenity of future occupier, avoid increasing flooding, provide well designed, accessible scheme, reduce the need for travel, contribute towards the goal of zero-carbon.
- 5.23 ***Policy CP3 - General Principles for Development*** states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale and design, provide a functional, accessible scheme, have no detrimental impact upon ecological, heritage, landscape, geological features or watercourses, maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora, provision for complementary facilities, contribute to a sense of place, provide for open space, contribute towards community facilities, do not lead to the loss of dwellings or community or residential accommodation. Compliance with these criteria will need to be demonstrated through the submission of a Design and Access Statement.
- 5.24 ***Policy CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability*** states that residential development must deliver a balanced mix of densities, dwelling types, tenures and sizes. Schemes of 5 or more dwellings (or on sites over 0.16 ha) are expected to provide up to 50% affordable housing, subject to viability. The type, size and tenure of affordable units will be determined

through negotiation with the Council, taking into account identified housing needs, site circumstances and other relevant factors.

- 5.25 **Policy CP6 – Managing Travel Demand** states that development should manage travel demand by promoting sustainable transport choices, locating schemes where multiple modes of travel are available, and minimising the need to travel. Proposals should improve transport infrastructure, including rail, road, pedestrian and cycle facilities (with provision for reduced mobility), and ensure appropriate parking in line with car ownership levels. Development must also mitigate impacts on local and strategic transport networks, enhance road safety, and avoid creating traffic or transport-related environmental problems.
- 5.26 **Policy CP7 – Biodiversity** states that development should seek to conserve and enhance sites of international, national, and local importance for nature conservation. Development that could harm designated sites, priority habitats or species, veteran trees, or key ecological features will only be permitted where the need for the scheme clearly outweighs the ecological harm, no less harmful alternative is available, and suitable mitigation or compensatory measures are secured.
- 5.27 **Policy CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals** states that the scale of development proposals must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location together with their accessibility.

Wokingham Management Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)

- 5.28 **Policy CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development** states that planning applications that accord with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.29 **Policy CC02 – Development Limits** states that planning permission for proposals at the edge of settlements will only be granted where they can demonstrate that the development, including boundary treatments, is within development limits and respects the transition between the built up area and the open countryside by taking account of the character of the adjacent countryside and landscape.
- 5.30 **Policy CC03 – Green infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping** relates to green infrastructure and trees and requires development proposals to achieve criteria including protection and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features

- 5.31 **Policy CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction** states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that seek to deliver high quality sustainably designed and constructed developments.
- 5.32 **Policy CC07 – Parking** states that development proposals must demonstrate compliance with the parking standard set out in Appendix 2 of the MDD. Schemes must also ensure that an appropriate overall level of off-street parking is retained.
- 5.33 **Policy CC09 – Development and Flood Risk** requires that all sources of flood risk, including historic events, must be fully considered in the planning process to ensure inappropriate development is avoided. Development should follow the sequential approach, directing proposals to areas of lowest flood risk and ensuring flood risk is not increased elsewhere, with betterment sought where possible.
- 5.34 **Policy CC10 – Sustainable Drainage** requires all development to manage surface water sustainably, taking climate change into account. This must be demonstrated through either a Flood Risk Assessment or a Surface Water Drainage Strategy. Proposals should replicate greenfield runoff rates and volumes, or, on brownfield sites, reduce them as close to greenfield levels as possible.
- Schemes are expected to incorporate appropriately designed Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that provide long-term functionality and wider social and environmental benefits. Clear details must be provided on SuDS design, adoption and maintenance arrangements, and proposals must avoid adverse impacts on the public sewerage network where surface water discharge is proposed.
- 5.35 **Policy TB05 – Housing Mix** requires residential development to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes, reflecting the character of the area and both current and projected housing needs. Where affordable housing is provided, the mix should align with the Council's Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing SPD. A proportion of dwellings, typically 10–20%, should also meet Lifetime Homes Standards to ensure accessibility and adaptability.
- 5.36 **Policy TB07 – Internal Space Standards** requires that new residential units, including conversions or changes of use, provide internal layouts and sizes that adequately meet the amenity needs of future occupiers. Development proposals are assessed against minimum standards to ensure appropriate space, functionality, and liveability.
- 5.37 **Policy TB21 – Landscape Character** requires development proposals to take account of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment,

addressing landscape quality, sensitivity, strategy, and key issues. Schemes should retain or enhance the condition, character, and features that contribute to the local landscape.

- 5.38 **Policy TB23 – Biodiversity and Development** requires development to comply with Core Strategy Policy CP7 and to protect and enhance biodiversity. Proposals should incorporate new or improved biodiversity features through design, layout, and landscaping, provide appropriate buffers between development and designated or important habitats, and ensure ecological connectivity by maintaining and creating wildlife corridors integrated with the wider green infrastructure network.

Wargrave Parish Design Statement

- 5.39 The Parish Council has prepared a Design Statement (1999) which forms part of the considerations for this planning statement.

Planning Advice Note(s) (PAN)

- 5.40 Relevant PAN's to this application are as follows;

- Facilitating Appropriate Development
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

Relevant Legislation

- 5.41 In considering the issue of the principle of the proposed development it is necessary to also consider the legal framework within which planning decisions are made. Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (as also confirmed by the NPPF).

- 5.42 Specifically, section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states:

'In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:

- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to application,***
- b) And local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and***
- c) Any other material considerations.'***

- 5.43 Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

- 5.44 When considering whether or not a proposed development accords with a development plan, it is not necessary to say that it must accord with every policy within the development plan. The question is whether it accords overall with the development plan (*Stratford on Avon v SSCLG* [2014] JPL 104). Even if a proposal cannot be described as being in accordance with the development plan, the statutory test requires that a balance be struck against other material considerations. The Courts have emphasised that a planning authority is not obliged to slavishly adhere to the development plan and should apply inherent flexibility: *Cala Homes (South) Limited v SSCLG* [2011] JPL 1458 and *Tesco Stores Ltd v Dundee City Council* [2012] 2 P.&C.R. 9.

6.0 DETAILS OF THE PROPSAL: USE, AMOUNT & SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

Principal of Development

- 6.1 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states ***‘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 11). For decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay’.***
- 6.2 The Core Strategy’s spatial vision explains that new development will be concentrated in those towns and villages with existing or proposed infrastructure and services and access to public transport which can support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly for private cars. The site lies within the defined settlement limits of Wargrave which is identified as a location with facilities and services which are appropriate for modest levels of development.
- 6.3 The site lies within an established residential area in an acknowledged sustainable location within walking and cycling distance of the village centre and with the convenience store adjacent to the site. The site is underutilised and in increasingly poor condition and has the potential to accommodate new residential development without harm to the character of the area or neighbour amenity.
- 6.4 The proposals would therefore accord with the Council’s spatial strategy set out in its Vision (Section 3 of the CS), Policy CP1 (Sustainable development) and Policy CC01 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development). It would make a contribution as a windfall housing site to the Borough’s housing land supply.
- 6.5 The proposal would accord with national policy at paragraph 73 of the Framework which acknowledges that small and medium size sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out relatively quickly and requires LPAs to give great weight to the benefits of using suitable windfall sites within existing settlements for homes.

AMOUNT AND SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.6 CS Policy CP5 and MDD Policy TB05 seek an appropriate housing mix which reflects a balance between the underlying character of the area and current projected housing needs. The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (February 2016) identified a market housing need for mainly 3 bed units:

No of beds	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
Dwellings required	934	3488	5605	2862	12889
	7.2 %	27.1%	43.5%	22.2%	100%

- 6.7 The Council's most up-to-date Local Housing Needs Assessment (November 2023) shows the priority need continues to be for 3 bed units (Figures 47 and 48):

No of beds	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
Dwellings required	515	1399	5041	3890	10840
	4.7 %	12.9%	46.5%	35.9%	100%

- 6.8 On a sub-area basis, the Local Housing Needs Assessment (November 2023) also shows a similar shift towards a market housing need for larger units for the Northern Sub-Area within which the application site is located (Figure 52):

No of beds	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
Dwellings required	23	45	157	19	206
	11 %	22%	76%	9%	100%

- 6.9 The proposal is for 1 No. 3 bed house. This would be in line with the identified priority need for the Sub-Area in the latest Local Housing Needs Assessment (November 2023) which demonstrates a priority need for 3 bed units (some two thirds of all new market homes in the Northern Sub-Area).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 6.10 The NPPF sets out that there are three key objectives of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. Each are addressed as follows:
- a) an economic objective – the proposed development is sustainable economically by providing employment/supporting trades during the construction phase which supports the economic objective of sustainable development.

- b) a social objective – the proposed dwelling is of a high standard of design and amenity for future occupiers and makes a positive contribution to the supply of high quality homes within the District.
 - c) an environmental objective – the proposed dwelling will make efficient use of land in a sustainable location, within a settlement boundary. The new dwelling will also comply with modern building regulation requirements, and it will be well insulated and energy efficient (as encouraged by Local Plan policy 37). The proposal complies with the environmental objective of sustainable development.
- 6.11 CS Policies CP1, CP4, CP6, CP9 permit development where it is based on sustainable credentials in terms of access to local facilities and services and the promotion of sustainable transport. CS paragraph 4.57 aims to prevent the proliferation of development in areas away from existing development limits as these are not well located for facilities and services and would lead to the increase in use of the private car.
- 6.12 The site is in a settlement which the Council acknowledges is served by shops and facilities and suitable for modest levels of additional development. The CS para. 2.82 notes that Wargrave has its own railway station albeit with a limited stopping service. The Council's updated Settlement Hierarchy Assessment (September 2024) reaffirms that Wargrave is a 'Modest development location' (Tier 2 in the settlement hierarchy) which have sizeable populations and contain most of the key services and facilities and some of the higher-order services and facilities. It also notes that Wargrave is 2.8km from the nearest Tier 1 settlement and (like most modest development locations) has fair public transport accessibility.
- 6.13 The application also considers the site's accessibility to local shops and services. It highlights the proximity of a convenience store immediately adjacent to the site, a doctors' surgery and pharmacy (approximately 250m), Robert Piggott Junior School (640m), the main shops along the High Street (840m), and Wargrave railway station (1,450m). These distances demonstrate that the site is highly accessible on foot and by bicycle, in accordance with the recommended walking distances set out in the CIHT guidance *"Guidelines for Providing Journeys on Foot."*

7.0 LAYOUT, DESIGN AND APPEARANCE

DESIGN AND AMENITY

- 7.1 The NPPF sets out that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to the local character of the surrounding area (paragraph 131).
- 7.2 CS Policy CP3 states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials, and character to the area in which it is located, and must be of high-quality design.
- 7.3 The area includes a mix of housing types and ages although the predominant characteristic is Victorian and Edwardian brick houses mainly semi-detached with some detached and terraced houses. These sit quite close to the road and as a consequence the street scene has a fairly dense and enclosed appearance.
- 7.4 The Design and Access Statement provides a full analysis of the characteristics of the local area and explains the design parameters for the development.
- 7.5 The garage is designed to mirror the contemporary architectural language of the main dwelling, ensuring a cohesive and unified appearance across the site. Although contemporary in form, it is carefully designed to sit comfortably within the street scene of Victoria Road, respecting the established building line and scale of surrounding development. The garage is positioned to maintain a low visual profile, preventing it from appearing as a dominant feature within the streetscape. High-quality materials are proposed, including black facing brick and timber detailing to match the main dwelling, ensuring consistency across the site. The design approach, together with the use of complementary materials, allows the garage to integrate sensitively with both the host dwelling and the wider character of the area.
- 7.6 The main dwelling, although contemporary in design, is carefully positioned to sit low within the site—set below the finished ground level of the neighbouring properties—so that its green living roof aligns with the level of Victoria Road. This approach ensures that, when viewed from surrounding properties, the garden retains its natural appearance rather than being read as a prominent built form. High-quality materials are proposed, including black facing brick and timber detailing, while the

green roof further softens the building's presence and integrates it into the surrounding landscape.

- 7.7 Both the garage and the main dwelling is positioned appropriately within the plot, retaining sufficient distance to the site boundaries to ensure that the overall development will not appear cramped or an over development of the site and complying with the Council's guidance on minimum separation gaps.
- 7.8 CS Policy CP5 requires an appropriate density for new developments. Guideline R10 to the Borough Design Guide SPD seeks to ensure that the development achieves an appropriate density in relation to local character. The proposal is for a replacement dwelling and is therefore considered to respect the existing character of the area.
- 7.9 MDD Policy TB07 states that proposals for new residential units should ensure of future occupiers. Guideline R17 to the Borough Design Guide SPD (2012) requires adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity for future occupiers. The standards set out in these documents are based on former Mayor of London Housing Guide standards although I am aware the Council also relies on the Government nationally described space standards, so I have assessed the proposals on this basis.
- 7.10 The proposal would comply with the nationally described space standards:

		NDSS	Proposal	Bed 1	Bed 2	Bed3
Main Dwelling	3B6P	95m ²	196.6m ²	Double 16.4m ² 3.8m wide	Double 11.5m ² 3.5m wide	Double 12.8m ² 3.5m wide

- 7.11 Therefore the proposal would comply with the nationally described space standards in terms of overall unit size and bedroom sizes and widths. The proposal also incorporates built-in storage of 8.4m² to accord with the standards.
- 7.12 Guideline R18 of the Borough Design Guide SPD (2012) requires sufficient sunlight and daylight to new properties, with the dwelling afforded a reasonable dual outlook and southern aspect. The habitable rooms of the dwelling in this scheme would receive adequate light from the front and rear and side windows. The proposals provides good natural light to all habitable rooms.
- 7.13 CS Policy CP3 seeks to ensure that new developments are not detrimental to the amenities of adjoining land uses. Guideline R15 to the Borough

Design Guide SPD (2012) requires the retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms, with separation of 22 metres to the rear. The proposed dwelling has been carefully designed as a single-storey building set down into the plot. As a result, the roofline will sit approximately at the external ground floor level of surrounding properties, ensuring there is no direct overlooking of neighbouring habitable rooms. Instead, views from adjoining properties will be limited to the dwelling's green living roof, maintaining both privacy and a garden-like outlook.

- 7.14 The garage is positioned set back in line with the existing dwelling, providing visual separation from the street scene and neighbouring properties. It is intended solely for storage and, due to its siting and scale, does not result in overlooking or any adverse impact on the privacy or amenity of surrounding occupiers.
- 7.15 Guideline R18 to the Borough Design Guide SPD (2012) seeks to protect sunlight and daylight to existing properties and ensure that new developments do not have a detrimental impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties. Given the separation distances, orientation and design of the development there is unlikely to be an unacceptable loss of light between the proposed development and neighbouring properties.
- 7.16 MDD Policy CC03 seeks to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping. MDD Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character. Guideline R14 to the Borough Design Guide SPD (2012) requires well-designed hard and soft landscaping that complements housing.
- 7.17 The proposal has been carefully designed to ensure that it does not result in the loss of any important trees, planting, or established vegetation within the site. The retention of this natural landscaping will help to preserve the verdant character of the plot and its contribution to the wider streetscape, while also safeguarding existing habitats and enhancing the site's overall sense of maturity.

8.0 ACCESS AND CAR PARKING PROVISION

- 8.1 The NPPF states at paragraph 115 that 'Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe'.
- 8.2 The proposed layout makes provision for a total of six car parking spaces, comprising four external spaces and two spaces within the integral double garage. The development will continue to utilise the existing access point onto Victoria Road, which currently serves the site. As such, the proposal will not generate any intensification of use or increase in traffic movements beyond those associated with the existing three-bedroom dwelling
- 8.3 MDD Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 set out the Council's parking standards including provision for EVCP facilities. Based on Table C3-3 and using the Council's parking calculator it is assessed that the complies with the standards. EVCPs are provided to comply with the Councils standards.
- 8.4 MDD Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 also set out minimum cycle parking standards which should be conveniently located, covered and secure. The standards require storage for at least 2 cycles for new dwellings, of which the garage has suitable storage space to accommodate this.
- 8.5 A bin storage area has been allowed for new the dwelling for ease of access (although could be allowed for nearer to the garage) and the bin collection point on Victoria Road would remain the same as with the existing property. This would comply with the advice at paragraph 6.8.8 of Manual for Streets.

9.0 ECOLOGY

- 9.1 MDD Policy TB23 requires development proposals to incorporate new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.
- 9.2 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment prepared by Arbtech is submitted with the application. The site was assessed as of overall low ecological value with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain. No evidence of protected species was recorded. Specifically, no evidence of bats was recorded within any of the buildings and structures or trees. The site is assessed as providing negligible roosting opportunities for bats. There were no ponds on the site and therefore no breeding opportunities for reptiles or amphibians and no records of GCN within the surrounding 1km study area.
- 9.3 The assessment concludes there are no ecological constraints to the redeveloped proposal. A series of generic mitigation measures could be implemented to reduce any impact the proposal may have on local wildlife and to provide enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance set out in NPPF 2024.
- 9.4 MDD Policy CC10 states that all development proposals must ensure surface water arising from the proposed development, including taking into account climate change, is managed in a sustainable manner and this must be demonstrated through a Surface Water Drainage Strategy.
- 9.5 The site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, which is classified as an area at the lowest risk of flooding. In accordance with national planning guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework, development within Flood Zone 1 is considered appropriate without the need for a formal Flood Risk Assessment. This designation demonstrates that the site is safe from both fluvial and surface water flooding, and the proposed development will not increase the risk of flooding either on the site or elsewhere.
- 9.6 A drainage strategy has been prepared by Atelier T&B and submitted with the application. The report provides an assessment of the proposal including specifications demonstrating how the proposal complies with the Government SuDS hierarchy and the specification is achievable. The report also includes an initial SuDS operation and management plan which describes how the SuDS system for this development would be

managed throughout the lifespan of the development and who will be responsible for maintenance.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 The new National Planning Policy Framework published on 12 December 2024 reinforces the urgent priority that the Government gives to housing delivery and the need for councils to play their part in meet housing need. The Framework introduces new immediate mandatory housing targets for councils to ramp up housebuilding to meet the Government's ambitious targets of 370,000 new homes each year.
- 10.2 The proposal would provide an additional homes within the development limits of an existing settlement area. Wargrave is identified as a settlement within which modest development would accord with the Council's spatial strategy. The site is within walking and cycling distance of a range of shops and facilities in the village and is 2.8km from the nearest Tier 1 settlement and has fair public transport accessibility. The small scale of the proposal (A minor development) is appropriate for this settlement both in terms of the spatial strategy and retaining local character.
- 10.3 The proposal would therefore accord with the Council's spatial strategy set out in its Vision (Section 3 of the CS), Policy CP1 (Sustainable development) and Policy CC01 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development). It would make a contribution as a windfall housing site to the Borough's housing land supply.
- 10.4 The proposal would contribute to the Borough's housing land supply and specifically the identified priority need for 3 bed homes.
- 10.5 The proposal accords with national policy at paragraph 73 of the Framework which acknowledges that small and medium sizes sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out relatively quickly and requires LPAs to give great weight to the benefits of using suitable windfall sites within existing settlements for homes.
- 10.6 The drawings and the other submitted reports demonstrate how the proposal complies with policies relating to the character of the area, design and materials, housing mix, space standards, neighbour amenity, trees, access and car/cycle parking, biodiversity and surface water drainage.
- 10.7 The proposals are sustainable development which would contribute the following benefits to the three overarching economic, social and environmental objectives at NPPF para. 8 and which weigh in favour of the proposals:

- Economic objective – Provides land for housing to support economic growth. The site is immediately available for development to support economic growth. Benefits to the local community and local economy including creation of jobs and supply chain investment associated with the construction stage and increased demand for local goods and services over the long-term occupation of the dwellings and the New Homes Bonus payment which is a local finance consideration to which the Council must have regard in determining the application as required by S70(2) of the TCPA 1990.
- Social objective – Supports a strong and vibrant community by contributing to the supply of housing in a sustainable urban location. Meets the Government’s policy to significantly boost the supply of housing and makes a particular contribution to the priority need for 3 bedroom houses identified in the Council’s latest housing needs assessment. Paragraph 73 of the Framework requires the decision maker to give great weight to the benefits of using suitable windfall sites within existing settlements for homes.
- Environmental objective – The proposal delivers additional housing within the development limits of the settlement without harm to the built, historic or natural environment and without harm to the character and visual amenity of the area. The proposal would offer a good choice of non-car modes of travel given its accessible location.

The Tilted Balance

- 10.8 The Council’s latest published annual monitoring report (March 2025) indicates 2.5 years’ supply. The Council in determining residential applications in recent months has acknowledged that it still does not have a 5 year housing land supply, as reintroduced by footnote 8 to the new Framework, (in fact, reports to the Council’s Planning Committee on 11 December 2024 noted the current housing land supply is less than 4 years) such that paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the Framework is engaged. Consequently, those policies which are most important for determining applications for new housing including CS Policies CP9 and CP11, as well as MDD Policy CC02, are considered out-of-date in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF. None of the policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance as listed in footnote 7 to the Framework apply or provide a clear reason for disapplying the presumption in favour of granting planning permission.

- 10.9 The effect of paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the Framework is to tilt the balance in favour of granting planning permission unless the benefits of the proposal are significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the adverse effects, i.e. it gives more weight to those benefits.
- 10.10 Whilst I consider that applying the normal planning balance the proposal accords with policies and planning permission should be granted, the triggering of the tilted balance provides additional justification in support of the proposals. I have set out the economic, social and environmental benefits above.
- 10.11 I conclude there would be no adverse impacts resulting from the proposal which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh these benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole, having particularly regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land and securing well-designed. I have demonstrated how the proposal would contribute to each of these key policies. Therefore, planning permission should be granted.