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Design and access statement

New house, Land behind 26 Wargrave Road, Twyford

Job Ref: 2608
June 2026

Introduction & Purpose

Land adjacent to 26 Wargrave Road, Twyford, Wokingham RG10 9PQ
Proposed development: Erection of one self-build three-bedroom bungalow with associated access, parking and landscaping.
Local planning authority: Wokingham Borough Council

This Design & Access Statement supports a full planning application for the erection of one new single-storey dwelling on land formerly part of the garden of 26 Wargrave Road, Twyford. It explains how the proposal responds to the site's physical and policy context, sets out the design rationale, and demonstrates that appropriate and inclusive access can be achieved in line with the Wokingham Borough Design Guide SPD and relevant local plan policies.
The statement should be read alongside the feasibility material, previous planning reports and surveys, which provide further technical detail on drainage, trees, ecology and access, as well as the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan and Wokingham Borough Design Guide, which together guide design quality and character response in this location.



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Brief

Overall requirements

to consider the best way to design a house to provide the home envisaged by the client.

Users:

- - Family house
- - Flexible living for long term needs.

Function:

- - Single storey living with separation of public and private space.
- - Good relationship with external space.
- - Areas for parking and bikes
- - Low maintenance property

Style:

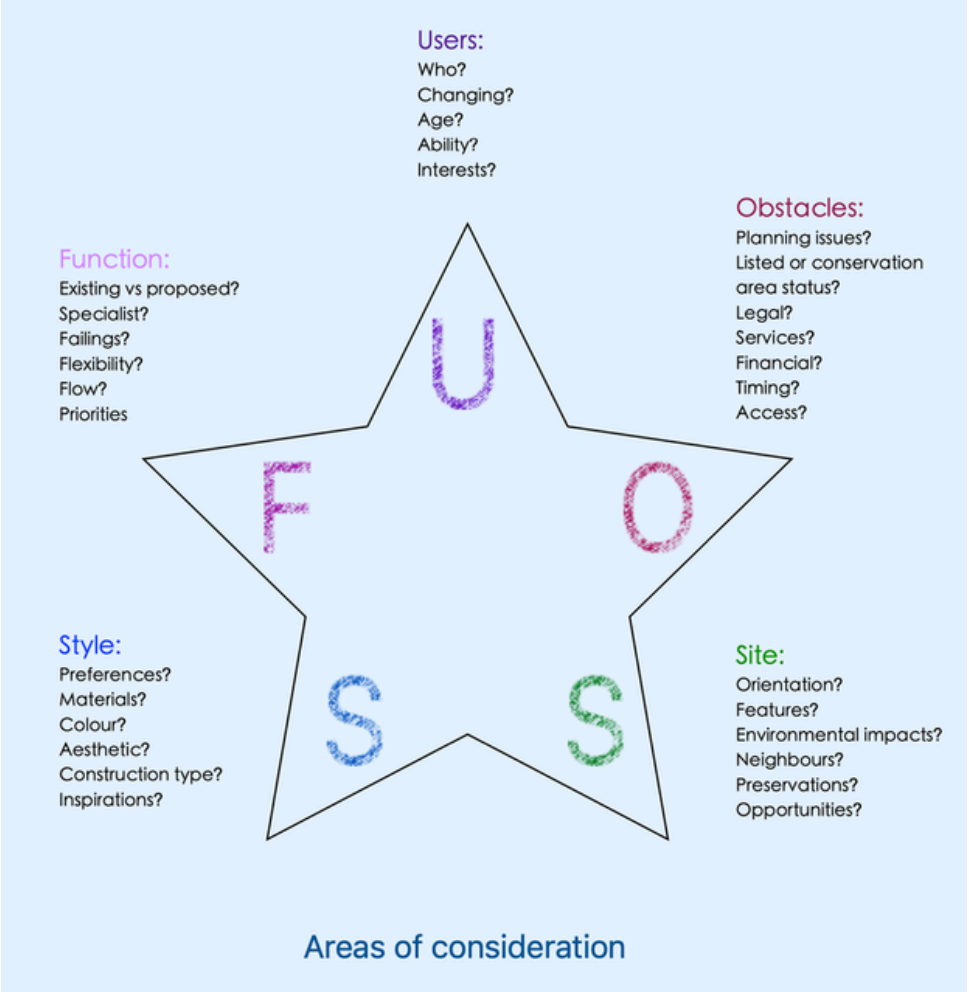
- - To match surrounding late twentieth century developments
- - Material references to locality.
- - Simple shapes and similar materials
- - Use of new construction, insulation and services to maximise environmental benefits.

Obstacles:

- - Designs to be in accordance with local guidelines and recommendations.
- - Ensuring privacy maintained to neighbouring properties.

Site:

- - Relevant elevations to streets on either side of the site.
- - Established planting to rear boundary.
- - Two storey houses and bungalows to all sides.



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Location and site

The application site forms part of the former rear/side garden of 26 Wargrave Road but does not adjoin Wargrave Road itself; instead, it lies between Lincoln Gardens and Hermitage Drive on the northern side of Hermitage Drive. The plot is broadly rectangular, set back from Hermitage Drive by around 20 metres, and is currently mainly grassed garden enclosed by hedges with mature trees along the eastern boundary and some younger trees to the south.





The surrounding area is a mature residential neighbourhood characterised by detached and semi-detached properties, including 1970s bungalows and two-storey houses, with primary school, shops and public transport available within Twyford village, which lies within the defined settlement boundary and in Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk of flooding). The site is not within a conservation area and there are no listed buildings on or immediately adjacent to the land.

Planning History & context

The site has previously been the subject of proposals for backland residential development, including a 2016 refusal for two dwellings (ref 162886) and, more recently, an application for a single self-build bungalow supported by a detailed planning statement and technical reports. The later decision notice for application 252297 refused planning permission for one self-build dwelling, identifying concerns about cramped layout and siting, design relationship to Hermitage Drive and Lincoln Gardens, quality of internal accommodation, impact on neighbouring amenity, and concerns relating to biodiversity information and self-build exemption.

The current proposal draws on that previous work but is consciously framed to respond positively to Wokingham Borough Council's design expectations, garden development policy TB06, Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3, and the design principles in policy TW13 of the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan and the Borough Design Guide SPD.



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Design Brief & Objectives

The brief is to create a modest, well-designed three-bedroom bungalow providing a long-term home for the applicants, making efficient use of an under-used residential garden plot within the settlement boundary while respecting the character and amenity of the surrounding streets. The dwelling is intended as a self-build project, with the applicants closely involved in design and delivery, and has been conceived to sit comfortably alongside existing 1970s bungalows and other nearby properties rather than competing with them.
Key objectives include: providing a simple, context-driven form that reflects neighbouring bungalows; ensuring a layout and orientation that avoids overlooking and overbearing effects; retaining and protecting existing trees; and using durable, energy-efficient materials and details that accord with Wokingham's emphasis on inclusive, harmonious and sustainable places.

Use & Amount of Development

The proposal is for a single self-build three-bedroom bungalow with associated private garden, driveway and parking, and no subdivision into multiple units. This represents a low-intensity residential use entirely consistent with the surrounding pattern of detached and semi-detached dwellings and is materially less intensive than the earlier two-dwelling proposal previously refused on the site.
By limiting the amount of development to one single-storey dwelling, the scheme helps avoid the overdevelopment concerns identified in earlier decisions and aligns with Wokingham's approach to garden development under policy TB06, which seeks layouts and plot coverage appropriate to the prevailing character.

Site & Garden Layout

The bungalow is positioned within the rectangular plot so that it addresses both Lincoln Gardens and Hermitage Drive, helping it read as part of the existing development pattern rather than an isolated backland structure. The siting and orientation have been chosen to maintain meaningful gaps, retain a sense of openness between buildings, and provide a proportionate, useable private garden area that meets Wokingham Borough Design Guide expectations for depth, shape and functionality.
Garden space is arranged predominantly to each side of the bungalow, giving quiet space to the bedroom side and more family space to the living room side, reflecting local precedents where side gardens serve dwellings close to the site and where varied garden configurations are characteristic of Hermitage Drive and Lincoln Gardens. The layout allows for convenient access from main rooms to garden areas while keeping parking and turning areas clearly defined and visually softened by planting.

Scale & Massing

The dwelling is designed as a single-storey bungalow with a simple roof profile, reflecting the modest height and form of nearby 1970s bungalows and chalet-style dwellings along Hermitage Drive. By limiting development to one storey and using a restrained roof form, the building mass is kept low, reducing its visual presence in the street scene and ensuring it does not appear unduly dominant or overbearing when seen from neighbouring gardens.
The scale has been consciously set below that of typical two-storey dwellings in the wider area, helping the proposal integrate with existing rooflines and supporting the Borough Design Guide objective of taking full account of mass and height in relation to adjacent development and surrounding spaces.

Appearance & Materials

The architectural language is intentionally simple and pared back, using a straightforward bungalow form that reflects the adjacent 1970s properties while incorporating modern detailing and materials. External finishes are proposed as a combination of brick and render with concrete roof tiles to match local dwellings, with limited areas of timber boarding as an accent referencing the local vernacular and adding visual interest without over-complication.
Elevations are designed to create active frontages to both Lincoln Gardens and Hermitage Drive, with appropriately placed windows and doors providing natural surveillance and preventing any blank or inactive elevations to the public realm. The palette, proportions and detailing are all chosen to sit comfortably within an area where there is no single dominant architectural style but where quality, coherence and neighbourliness are emphasised by the Borough Design Guide and Twyford Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbouring bungalow of similar appearance



Access, Parking & Movement

Vehicular and pedestrian access is taken directly from Hermitage Drive, using a new driveway that does not remove any formally allocated on-street parking and meets Wokingham's access standards. The driveway provides two on-plot parking spaces in accordance with borough parking standards for a three-bedroom dwelling, with sufficient space to allow vehicles to manoeuvre safely and to provide cycle parking within the curtilage.
For pedestrian movement, there is a clear route from the street to the front door and around the sides of the dwelling to the garden, ensuring easy access for residents, visitors, deliveries and emergency services.
The low-traffic, purely domestic nature of the use, combined with the modest number of vehicle movements associated with a single dwelling, ensures that the development will not prejudice highway safety or convenience.

Inclusive Design

The proposal is for a single-storey bungalow that inherently supports inclusive, step-free living, in line with national guidance and Wokingham's emphasis on inclusive, accessible places. The dwelling has been designed to comply with current Building Regulations accessibility standards, with level or gently ramped approaches, level thresholds and internal circulation capable of accommodating residents with reduced mobility.
By providing all principal accommodation on one level, including three bedrooms and main living areas, the dwelling can function as a long-term home suitable for different life stages and changing needs, echoing the approach taken in other recent self-build and "forever home" schemes in the borough. This supports the objective in the Borough Design Guide to ensure that new development meets the needs of its users and contributes to vibrant, inclusive communities.

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Trees, Landscaping & Garden Character

The site's existing hedges and mature trees, particularly along the eastern boundary, are an important component of local character and will be retained and protected as part of the proposals. Previous arboricultural survey work on the site identified trees of moderate and low quality and demonstrated that a suitable layout can be achieved without tree removal, subject to protective measures; this approach is continued here, with foundations and construction methods informed by arboricultural advice.
Landscaping will include reinstatement and reinforcement of hedges to maintain privacy and continuity with the existing garden character, together with planting around the dwelling and along boundaries to soften the parking area and integrate the new bungalow into views from Hermitage Drive and Lincoln Gardens. Garden spaces will be capable of typical domestic use, with lawn and planting areas arranged to provide an attractive and usable outdoor environment for future occupiers in line with Borough Design Guide guidance on private amenity space.

Residential Amenity (Future Occupiers)

The internal layout has been conceived to provide a good standard of accommodation, with three bedrooms and open-plan living space arranged to receive adequate natural light and outlook. Wokingham's policies on internal space (MDD policy TB07) and the Borough Design Guide's guidance on daylight, outlook and room sizes have informed the design approach, ensuring that habitable rooms are served by windows to appropriate elevations.
External amenity space is designed to be proportionate to the scale of the dwelling, roughly rectangular in form and of sufficient depth to accommodate seating, play and planting, following the qualitative benchmarks used in the Borough Design Guide and previous assessments of garden adequacy at this site. The resulting arrangement avoids the substandard accommodation and poor outlook concerns that can arise from more cramped, over-intensive schemes.

Neighbouring Amenity

Careful consideration has been given to the relationship with neighbouring properties on Hermitage Drive, Lincoln Gardens and 26 Wargrave Road to avoid unacceptable impacts on privacy, outlook or light. The single-storey height, modest roof form and orientation of windows are intended to prevent direct overlooking of nearby gardens, with boundary hedges and retained trees further filtering views and maintaining a sense of separation.
Set-backs and separation distances reflect those in the surrounding area and comply with the Borough Design Guide's guidance on back-to-flank and other key distances, ensuring that the bungalow does not appear overbearing or result in significant overshadowing of adjacent amenity spaces. In this way, the proposal responds to the amenity concerns cited in earlier refusals and aligns with Core Strategy policy CP3 and MDD policy TB06 on garden development.

Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain

Wokingham's policies CP7 and TB23 seek to protect and enhance biodiversity.
Mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain applies to most development in England, but the regulations changed for applications made on or after 6 August 2026. Development with a red line site area of 0.2 hectares or less is now exempt, as long as it does not negatively affect an on-site priority habitat. The self-build exemption referred to in the earlier application has been removed and is not relied on here.
The application site, including the access from Hermitage Drive, is 331 sq.m. This is well below the 0.2 hectare threshold. The site is grassed garden enclosed by hedges, with trees along the eastern boundary and to the south. The ecology report confirms there is no priority habitat on the site and that the hedges and trees are retained and not negatively affected by the proposal. The development is therefore exempt from mandatory BNG and no biodiversity gain condition is needed.
The scheme still supports biodiversity. The existing hedges and trees are retained and protected, and new planting is proposed along the northern boundary. The elevations include an integrated swift brick at the rear, with a bat box and pollinator-friendly planting. These can be secured by condition if the Council wishes.

Drainage and Sustainable Design

The site lies in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of fluvial flooding, but surface water management has still been considered in line with Wokingham’s drainage policies CP1 and CC10. Previous technical work for the site identified that a sustainable drainage strategy using features such as soakaways, SuDS planters and permeable surfaces can provide appropriate control of runoff, and this approach will be maintained and refined for the current bungalow proposal.
The dwelling itself is intended to be energy-efficient, with modern standards of insulation and airtightness and the potential to incorporate low-carbon technologies such as air source heat pumps and EV charging, reflecting both national policy in the NPPF and Wokingham’s aims for sustainable, low-carbon development. The simple form and robust materials also support long-term durability and reduced maintenance, which is particularly important in the context of a self-build home.

Planning Policy Context

The development plan for this site is the Core Strategy, the Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan and the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan. Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and MDD policy TB06 on residential garden development are the most relevant. Neighbourhood Plan policy TW13 and the Borough Design Guide SPD set the design expectations. Sections 5 to 13 explain how the proposal meets them.

The site is inside the defined settlement boundary of Twyford, which is a predominantly built-up area. Under the August 2026 NPPF, policy S3 therefore directs the proposal to policy S4. S4 says development within settlements should be approved unless the benefits are substantially outweighed by adverse effects, tested against the national decision-making policies.

The benefits are:

- one new self-build home on an underused plot within the settlement. NPPF policy L2 gives substantial weight to better use of underused land and to additional homes within settlements;
- a single-storey, step-free home that can adapt to changing needs over time;
- no loss of trees or hedges, and some biodiversity enhancement.

There are no adverse effects that come close to outweighing these. The design responds directly to the earlier refusal reasons on layout, siting and amenity, as set out above.

The plot is now separate land. It is fenced off from the garden of 26 Wargrave Road and is no longer part of that curtilage, so the NPPF tests for additional units within an existing residential curtilage do not apply. Policy L3 expects development within settlements to make efficient use of land. A single dwelling on this plot does that. The single-storey form is a response to the character of the neighbouring bungalows.

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Conclusion

In summary, the proposal is for a single, modest, self-build bungalow on a well-located residential garden site within Twyford's settlement boundary, representing a sensitive and efficient use of land in an established residential context. The design has been informed by earlier planning history and Wokingham's current policy framework, with particular attention paid to avoiding a cramped appearance, providing good-quality internal and external amenity, protecting neighbours' living conditions, retaining trees and hedges, and integrating the building into the street scenes of Hermitage Drive and Lincoln Gardens.

The scheme responds positively to Core Strategy and MDD policies, the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan and the Borough Design Guide SPD, and offers a high-quality, accessible home that aligns with national objectives for sustainable development and housing delivery. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposal represents an appropriate and well-designed form of infill development, and the Council is respectfully invited to grant planning permission.

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