

**Land Adjacent Fredericks
Bath Road, Knowl Hill,
Wargrave, Berkshire
RG10 9UZ**

**Planning, Design & Access Statement
(including statement of community
engagement & Heritage Statement)**

Proposed 1no new dwelling

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1. Introduction

This document has been prepared by Murray Planning Associates on behalf of our client, Mr Guy Goodwin. The document seeks to support the proposed construction of a new dwelling with detached garage on a vacant plot located on the southern side of Bath Road.

The application has not been subject to any pre-application discussions with Wokingham Borough Council.

This statement should be read alongside the following supporting information:

- Site Location Plan
- Proposed Site Plan
- Carport Elevations
- Dwelling Elevations
- Proposed Street Scene
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- Proposed First Floor Plan
- Proposed Roof Plan
- Proposed Outline Section
- Proposed Site Section
- Energy Statement
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & BNG Assessment

The remainder of this document seeks to assess the site, review the relevant planning history, review the relevant planning policies, and justify the proposed development judged against the relevant local planning policies.

2. Site Location and Relevant Planning History

The application site comprises land adjoining Fredericks, Bath Road, Knowl Hill, Wargrave, RG10 9UZ. The site is located on the eastern side of Bath Road (A4), a principal route running through Knowl Hill, and occupies a position within an established frontage of development extending along this section of the highway.

Knowl Hill is characterised by a linear pattern of development concentrated along Bath Road, where residential, commercial and other rural land uses have evolved over time to form a continuous ribbon of built development. The application site forms part of this established pattern and is situated between existing residential properties, with built development immediately adjoining the site and extending both northwards and southwards along the road frontage. The site is therefore read in the context of the wider developed frontage which characterises this part of Knowl Hill.

The surrounding area comprises predominantly detached dwellings set within generous plots, interspersed with commercial premises, community facilities, leisure uses and areas of open land. Whilst the wider locality retains a distinctly rural character, the immediate context of the site is defined by the presence of existing buildings and associated domestic curtilages which collectively establish a developed edge along Bath Road.

To the rear (east) of the site lies Castle Royle Golf and Country Club, a substantial leisure facility incorporating an 18-hole golf course together with associated gym, health club and spa facilities. The golf course provides an open and landscaped backdrop to the site and forms a notable feature within the local area.

The site itself comprises a parcel of land enclosed by existing residential boundaries and associated landscaping. Mature trees, hedgerows and other vegetation are present within the surrounding area and contribute to the verdant character of the street scene and wider landscape setting.

Access to the site is obtained from Bath Road, which provides direct connections to the surrounding settlements of Maidenhead, Twyford and Reading. The site benefits from an established network of pedestrian infrastructure, including a lit footway running along Bath Road which provides convenient access to local services and facilities. Knowl Common is located approximately 600 metres from the site, whilst Knowl Hill Village Hall lies approximately 700 metres to the west. A public house and convenience store/filling station are located directly opposite the site on the western side of Bath Road and are readily accessible on foot via the existing pavement network.

The site is also well served by public transport. Bus stops are located immediately adjacent to the site on Bath Road and provide regular services to the surrounding settlements, including Maidenhead and Reading, with journey times of approximately 25 minutes. These services provide opportunities to access a wider range of employment, retail, leisure and community facilities without reliance on the private car.

In planning policy terms, the site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt and within land designated as Countryside. The site is also subject to a number of environmental and infrastructure-related constraints identified within the Council's mapping records, including Groundwater Protection Zone 3, a Wind Turbine Safeguarding Zone, a Contaminated Land Consultation Zone and a Green Route designation.

The site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, as defined by the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning, indicating land with the lowest probability of

fluvial flooding. The site is not located within a Conservation Area and does not contain any designated heritage assets.

The planning significance of these designations and constraints, together with the wider planning policy context, is considered in the subsequent sections of this Planning Statement.

Relevant Planning History

There are five previous planning applications on the site which are relevant to this application. Four previous applications have sought permission for a new dwelling at this site with all being refused and some losing appeal challenges.

One application involved the approval of neighbouring Chestnuts, which was approved under very special circumstances. These applications are listed below:

- 44211 – Proposed erection of detached dwelling – Refused – 16/05/1995
- F/2003/8787 – Proposed erection of one detached dwelling with double garage – Refused – 20/05/2003
- F/2008/1806 – Erection of detached house with garage – Refused – 17/02/2008
- 170350 - Erection of detached house with garage – Refused – 28/04/2017 and associated appeal subsequently dismissed 08/01/2018

Other applications relevant to neighbouring site (Chestnuts) – 41929 - Erection of 1 detached house with detached garage (Chestnuts) – Approved following the refusal of three applications before this for more substantial development.

3. Planning Policy Context

The application site lies within the administrative area of Wokingham Borough Council. Whilst located outside any defined settlement boundary, the site occupies a position within the established ribbon of development that extends along Bath Road through Knowl Hill. The site is also located within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the statutory development plan comprises the Wokingham Core Strategy (2010) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014).

In addition to the development plan, national planning policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration of significant weight.

At the time of writing, Wokingham Borough Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and has identified a substantial housing land supply shortfall. This is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and has implications for the weight afforded to certain development plan policies relating to the supply and location of housing.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Paragraph 2 of the NPPF confirms that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 11 establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking, where relevant development plan policies are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless:

- The application of policies within the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development; or
- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.

Section 5 of the Framework seeks to significantly boost the supply of homes. Paragraph 73 recognises the important contribution that small and medium-sized sites can make towards meeting housing needs and encourages local planning authorities to support the development of suitable windfall sites.

Paragraph 78 requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement.

Section 12 of the Framework seeks to achieve well-designed places. Paragraph 135 confirms that planning decisions should ensure developments are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and history, and establish or maintain a strong sense of place.

Section 13 relates to the protection of Green Belt land. Paragraph 154 confirms that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided they preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Such forms of development include limited infilling in villages.

In addition, paragraph 155 confirms that:

The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:

- a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;*
- b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;*
- c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and*
- d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157.*

The proposed development is for a new residential unit and is considered to comply with the guidance set out within paragraph 155 of the NPPF as it should not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it would:

- a.** Utilise land which is grey belt. Page 74 of the NPPF provides a definition of grey belt:

Grey belt: *For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143.*

'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

The site does not strongly contribute to the five purposes of Green Belt as set out in paragraph 143.

The site does not lie on the edge of a large built-up area where development would contribute to outward sprawl. Instead, it is physically and visually contained by existing development and boundary features. The land constitutes vacant land which sits between an existing and well-established ribbon of houses fronting the A4 and does not act or contribute towards the clear separation or 'gap' between large built-up areas. As such it does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purpose a).

Likewise, this small infill plot in no way acts to prevent any towns merging into one another and therefore does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purpose b).

The site has no direct functional or visual relationship with a historic town or its setting. It does not form part of a key landscape approach, historic vista, or designated setting that contributes to the appreciation of a historic settlement. The development would therefore not undermine this Green Belt purpose d).

As a result, the plot can be considered grey belt land and fully accords with criterion a. of paragraph 155.

- b.** The council has an identified need for more housing specially in the context of Wokingham Borough Council having a near 3,500 dwelling shortfall, equating to only being able to demonstrate a 2.5 year housing land supply¹. As such the proposals fully align with criterion b. which requires there to be a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed.
- c.** Criterion c. requires the development to be located in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of the Framework.

The applicants agents have undertaken an assessment of local services and public transport which demonstrates that, although the application site falls

¹ <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2025-08/2025%20YHLSS%20v%20Final%20August.pdf>

beyond any formally designated settlement boundary, it benefits from good access to a variety of everyday facilities and services.

Several local amenities are situated within convenient walking distance, whilst regular public transport connections provide access to a broader range of employment, retail, education and community facilities in Twyford, Maidenhead and Reading without reliance on the private car.

The site's sustainability credentials are further reinforced by its relationship with existing development along the Bath Road (A4), where established residential frontage development contributes to the area's built character and demonstrates the suitability of the location for residential occupation.

The site benefits from a high level of public transport accessibility for a location of this nature. The nearest bus stop is located directly adjacent the site (44m) for routes heading east towards Maidenhead and a west bound stop located approximately 70m on the same side of the road. All are safely accessible by pavement.

It is acknowledged that previous appeal decisions relating to the site reached a different conclusion regarding its sustainability credentials. However, those assessments were undertaken in a materially different context. Since that time, public transport provision serving the area has improved significantly, with enhanced bus services providing more frequent and reliable connections to key centres, including Twyford, Maidenhead and Reading. These services also offer convenient access to mainline railway stations, which in turn provide direct rail connections to Central London and other major employment destinations. Consequently, the accessibility of the site by sustainable modes of transport has improved considerably since the earlier appeal decisions were issued.

The bus stops noted above are now served by improved services since the time of the last appeal decision by the 127 and 227 bus routes. Together, these services provide regular connections to a range of nearby settlements and key

destinations, including Knowl Hill, Twyford, Maidenhead, Maidenhead Railway Station and Reading.

The 127 service operates on an hourly basis throughout the day, offering a valuable and reliable public transport link between the village and the wider area. In addition, the 227 service provides early morning and evening journeys that are specifically suited to commuter travel patterns, facilitating access to and from Twyford Railway Station.

Rail accessibility is a significant sustainability attribute of the site. Twyford Railway Station is located approximately 2.5 miles to the south-west and can be reached in around 10–15 minutes by bus or approximately 15 minutes by bicycle. The station is well equipped to support a range of travel choices, benefiting from extensive cycle parking facilities and a substantial car park, enabling convenient access for both local and longer-distance journeys.

Twyford is served by frequent Great Western Railway and Elizabeth Line services, providing direct connections to Reading, Maidenhead, Slough, London Paddington, the City of London, Canary Wharf and destinations across the wider Thames Valley. These services place a broad range of employment, educational, retail and leisure opportunities within easy reach of future residents.

The site's accessibility is further enhanced by its proximity to Reading Station, which can be reached in approximately seven minutes by rail from Twyford. As one of the principal railway interchanges in the United Kingdom, Reading provides connections to a comprehensive range of regional and national destinations, including Gatwick Airport, Southampton, Oxford, Bristol, Worcester, Birmingham, Manchester, South Wales, the South West and the North East of England. The station therefore offers access to an extensive national rail network, significantly increasing the range of destinations that can be reached by sustainable means.

Furthermore, the sustainability of the site has improved materially since the previous appeal decision was issued. Most notably, the introduction of the Elizabeth Line has significantly enhanced public transport connectivity across the area, providing direct rail services from nearby stations to Central London and major employment destinations in less than 50 minutes. This represents a substantial improvement in accessibility, enabling future residents to undertake commuting and other journeys by sustainable modes without the need to rely on private vehicle travel.

In parallel, improvements to local bus services now provide regular and convenient connections between Knowl Hill, Maidenhead and Twyford, linking the site directly to key rail hubs and a wide range of employment, retail, educational and leisure facilities. These enhanced bus and rail connections create an integrated public transport network that was not available at the time of the earlier appeal decision.

The cumulative effect of these transport improvements is that future occupiers would have genuine and attractive alternatives to private car use for both local and longer-distance journeys. As a result, the site's sustainability credentials have been significantly strengthened, and any previous conclusions regarding accessibility must be considered in the context of the substantially improved public transport infrastructure that now serves the area.

The site benefits from convenient access to a range of day-to-day services and community facilities. A 24-hour Londis store is located directly opposite the site, providing immediate access to basic essential day to day items, whilst the Knowl Hill Stores convenience shop lies approximately 0.8 miles to the north-east, equivalent to around an 18-minute walk.

Several leisure and social facilities are also available within close proximity. The Bird in Hand public house is situated opposite the site, whilst the Castle Royle Golf & Country Club is located approximately 0.2 miles to the south-west and offers a range of facilities including a restaurant, café, gym and swimming pool.

For a wider range of services, the nearby village of Twyford functions as the principal local centre and is readily accessible by bus, bicycle or car. Twyford provides a comprehensive range of facilities including a supermarket, GP and dental surgeries, a Post Office, independent shops, cafés, restaurants and other community services. The availability of these facilities within easy reach of the site ensures that many day-to-day needs can be met locally, further reinforcing the site's sustainability credentials and reducing the need for longer-distance travel.

Having regard to the availability of the local services detailed, opportunities for sustainable travel, and the substantially enhanced public transport network now serving the area since the site was last assessed at appeal, the site clearly represents a sustainable location for new development. The proposal is therefore consistent with the objectives of paragraphs 110 and 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seek to promote sustainable and well-connected patterns of growth and is compliant with criterion c.

- d.** The application is for one dwelling and does not constitute major development proposals and therefore criterion d. is not applicable to this case.

Having regard to paragraph 155 of the NPPF, the proposal complies with all relevant criteria for development on grey belt land. The site does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes, occupies a sustainable location, would deliver an additional dwelling to assist in meeting housing needs, and would not fundamentally undermine the function of the wider Green Belt. Consequently, the development should not be regarded as inappropriate development in Green Belt terms, and there is no policy basis for withholding permission on Green Belt grounds.

Local Planning Policy – Wokingham Core Strategy (2010) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)

Knowl Hill does not benefit from a defined settlement boundary within the adopted development plan. Consequently, the application site lies within land designated as Countryside and within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The Council's current housing land supply position is an important material consideration in the determination of this application. Given the acknowledged housing shortfall, policies which seek to restrict the supply and location of housing attract reduced weight where they are inconsistent with the Framework's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes.

However, the site remains subject to Green Belt policy but as shown through the assessment above is located entirely on grey belt land and the proposed new dwelling would not be regarded as inappropriate development. Nevertheless, the acceptability of the proposed development must still be assessed against both national and local Green Belt policy provisions, together with all other material planning considerations.

The principal development plan policies relevant to the proposal are Policies CP3, CP7, CP11, CP12 and CP17 of the Core Strategy and Policies CC01, TB01 and TB21 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

Policy CP3 – General Principles for Development

Policy CP3 seeks to ensure that development is of an appropriate scale, form and character, delivers a high quality of design, protects important environmental assets and integrates successfully with its surroundings.

The proposed dwelling has been designed to reflect the character of surrounding development and adopts a traditional architectural approach that is appropriate to the locality. The scale, massing and height of the building are

consistent with neighbouring residential properties and are proportionate to the size of the plot.

The proposed layout provides adequate private amenity space, off-street parking, turning facilities and refuse storage. The development has also been designed to minimise impacts upon neighbouring occupiers through the positioning of the dwelling within the site and the arrangement of fenestration. Renewable energy generation is incorporated through the provision of solar panels on the south-facing roof slope of the detached garage/car port building.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the objectives of Policy CP3.

Policy CP7 – Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

Policy CP7 seeks to ensure that development protects, enhances and restores biodiversity and green infrastructure, whilst delivering biodiversity net gains wherever possible.

The accompanying ecological assessment confirms that the site does not support any notable ecological features that would be adversely affected by the proposed development. The assessment concludes that the proposal will not result in any likely significant effects upon designated ecological sites.

Whilst the proposal will necessitate the removal of limited areas of scrub and ruderal vegetation, opportunities exist for the introduction of native planting and biodiversity enhancements within the site. Subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy CP7.

Policy CP11 – Development in the Countryside

Policy CP11 seeks to restrict development within the countryside unless specific exceptions apply.

The application site is located within the countryside designation. However, the weight afforded to restrictive countryside policies must be considered in the context of the Council's current housing land supply position and the Framework's objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing.

The site occupies a sustainable location within the established ribbon of development that characterises Knowl Hill. Existing footways provide direct and safe pedestrian access to local facilities including the village hall, public house, convenience store and bus stops located on Bath Road. Regular public transport services connect Knowl Hill with the larger settlements of Reading and Maidenhead.

The proposal would make a modest contribution towards addressing the Borough's housing needs through the delivery of an additional dwelling within an accessible and established residential location. The implications of Policy CP11 must therefore be considered in the wider context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within the Framework.

Policy CP12 – Green Belt

Policy CP12 seeks to prevent inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

The application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. However, the site occupies a small parcel of land within an established frontage of development and forms part of the continuous ribbon of development along Bath Road. The proposal comprises a single dwelling and detached garage within a site enclosed by existing residential development.

The proposal's compliance with NPPF Green Belt policy has already been assessed in detail within this Statement but is recapped below.

National policy confirms that limited infilling within villages is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, provided openness is preserved and the proposal does not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Paragraph 155 of the NPPF also confirms that the site would classify as grey belt land and as such the proposals would not constitute inappropriate development.

Policy CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC01 reflects the Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development and confirms that where relevant policies are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Given the Council's housing land supply position, this policy provides relevant support for the positive consideration of sustainable residential development proposals.

Policy TB01 – Development in the Green Belt

Policy TB01 requires development proposals within the Green Belt to preserve openness and avoid conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

The proposed development comprises a single dwelling on a site that is visually and physically associated with the existing built frontage along Bath Road. The proposal has been designed to reflect the scale and character of surrounding development and is not considered to materially erode the openness of the wider Green Belt. Detailed consideration of Green Belt matters is provided in a subsequent section of this Statement.

Policy TB21 – Design and Landscape Character

Policy TB21 seeks to ensure that development proposals retain and enhance landscape features which contribute positively to local character.

The principal landscape feature associated with the site is the mature vegetation along the Bath Road frontage. This vegetation is proposed to be retained and protected as part of the development. Access to the site will be achieved via the existing driveway arrangement serving the adjoining property known as Chestnuts, thereby avoiding the need for a new opening through the established frontage landscaping.

Additional planting and soft landscaping are proposed throughout the site to reinforce the verdant character of the locality and ensure that the development integrates successfully with its surroundings. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the objectives of Policy TB21.

Emerging Local Plan

Wokingham Borough Council is currently progressing a new Local Plan through the examination process. At the time of writing, adoption is anticipated during 2026.

Review of the emerging policies and proposals maps indicates that the application site is proposed to remain within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Consequently, the emerging Local Plan does not materially alter the planning policy context relevant to the determination of this application nor will it alter that the site is classified as grey belt land in the NPPF.

4. Assessment

Based on the planning policy assessment above the following are considered to be the key determining issues that will determine the outcome of the planning application:

- The proposed design
- Impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties
- Impact on ecology
- Landscaping

The Proposed Design

Amount

The site extends to approximately 0.11 hectares and is currently undeveloped. The proposal comprises the erection of a single detached dwelling and associated carport, representing a low-density form of development that is consistent with the character of the surrounding area.

The proposed dwelling would provide approximately 139 sq.m of internal floorspace and deliver a modest three-bedroom family home. The scale of accommodation is proportionate to the size of the plot and remains modest in comparison to a number of neighbouring residential properties. The proposed carport would provide an additional 36.4 sq.m of ancillary built form.

Overall, the proposed built footprint would occupy less than 10% of the site area (excluding the access drive), ensuring that the majority of the plot remains as landscaped garden and green curtilage. This development maintains an

appropriately balance between built and unbuilt space on the plot, aligning with the character of the shrouding area and minimises the visual impact of the proposal.

Layout

The proposed layout has been carefully designed in response to the site's constraints and surrounding context, with particular regard to safeguarding the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Access to the site is achieved via an existing private drive serving Chestnuts and adjoining properties, thereby avoiding the need for a new vehicular access onto Bath Road. The dwelling is positioned toward the rear of the plot, broadly reflecting the established building line of neighbouring dwellings to the south, while maintaining appropriate separation distances from surrounding properties. The carport and parking area are located adjacent to the access drive, providing a logical and efficient arrangement that minimises vehicle movements within the site.

The resulting layout makes effective use of the plot whilst retaining generous areas of open space and landscaping, ensuring that the development integrates successfully within its surroundings.

Scale

The proposed dwelling has been designed at a scale that is proportionate to both the size of the plot and the character of the surrounding area. The development represents a modest level of built form, with only approximately 9.5% of the site area (excluding the driveway) occupied by buildings.

The dwelling is proposed as a chalet bungalow (1.5-storey dwelling), a form that reduces its perceived bulk and massing when viewed from neighbouring properties and the surrounding area. The submitted street scene drawings

demonstrate that the ridge and eaves heights sit comfortably alongside adjacent dwellings and that the proposal would not appear overly dominant or incongruous within the street scene.

Accordingly, the scale of development is considered appropriate and reflective of the established pattern of development in the locality.

Access and Parking

Vehicular access will be taken from the existing private drive serving the site and neighbouring properties. No alterations to the existing access onto Bath Road are required.

Parking provision is accommodated within a two-bay carport, supplemented by additional parking space on the driveway for visitors. The proposed parking and turning arrangements ensure that vehicles can enter and leave the site in a safe and convenient manner, including the ability to turn within the site and exit in a forward gear.

Appearance

The surrounding area exhibits a varied architectural character, with no single dominant house type, style or palette of materials. The proposal therefore seeks to respond positively to local character rather than replicate any individual neighbouring property.

The dwelling adopts a traditional architectural approach, incorporating high-quality and locally characteristic materials, including red brickwork, terracotta roof tiles and tile hanging at first-floor level. These materials are commonly found within Knowl Hill and the wider area and will ensure that the development sits comfortably within its setting.

The modest scale of the dwelling, combined with the use of traditional materials and generous landscaping, will enable the proposal to integrate successfully into the surrounding streetscape. As such, the development will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area and will not appear visually intrusive or out of keeping with its surroundings.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

The proposed development has been carefully designed to ensure that the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers are preserved. Given the location of the site, the properties with the potential to experience any material effects are likely Chestnuts to the south and Fredericks to the north.

The proposed dwelling is positioned in line with the established pattern of development within the immediate area. In relation to Chestnuts, the dwelling would be located close to the existing building line, with the front elevation extending approximately 3 metres beyond that of the neighbouring property and the rear elevation terminating before the rear building line of Chestnuts. Importantly, no windows are proposed within the south-facing side elevation, thereby preventing any direct overlooking or loss of privacy to the occupiers of that property.

To the north, the proposed dwelling would be situated adjacent to the rear garden area of Fredericks. The north-facing elevation contains only a single first-floor window serving an en-suite bathroom. Should the Local Planning Authority consider it necessary, this window can be obscurely glazed and fixed shut below 1.7 metres above internal floor level, ensuring that no opportunity for overlooking or loss of privacy arises.

The dwelling has been designed as a modest chalet bungalow, with a scale, height and massing reflecting those of neighbouring residential properties. The

proposal will therefore integrate comfortably within the existing built environment and will not appear overbearing when viewed from adjoining sites. Furthermore, given the separation distances involved and the limited height of the building, the development will not give rise to any material loss of daylight, sunlight or overshadowing to neighbouring dwellings or their private amenity spaces.

Accordingly, the proposal will safeguard the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and fully accords with the residential amenity objectives of local and national planning policy. The proposal will not result in any unacceptable overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light, overshadowing, overbearing impact or other harm to residential amenity. The development therefore complies with the amenity requirements of the Development Plan and the design objectives of the NPPF.

Impact on ecology

The site has been previously assessed for ecological value, and updated ecology documentation accompanies this application, including a further bat survey, which has once again determined that the site is not being used for roosting by any bat species.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has become part of planning legislation since the previous planning applications at the site. The supporting documentation identifies that the development will result in a small net loss of habitat.

As such, the application will rely on the purchase of off-site biodiversity units to provide the required Biodiversity Net Gain.

Landscaping

As set out previously, the proposal represents a low-density form of development, with the majority of the site remaining undeveloped and retained as private garden and landscaped space. The limited extent of built form ensures that the spacious character of the plot is preserved and provides ample opportunity for the retention and enhancement of landscaping within the site. A key feature of the proposal is the retention of the established frontage hedgerow adjoining Bath Road. This vegetation forms the most significant landscape feature when viewed from the public realm and makes an important contribution to the verdant character of the street scene. Its retention will ensure that the development remains well-screened and visually contained.

The existing hedgerow will substantially filter views into the site, limiting visibility of the proposed dwelling from Bath Road. Any views that are available will be seen in the context of the surrounding residential development, which is characterised by detached dwellings set within generous plots and substantial landscaping. Consequently, the proposed dwelling will appear as a natural continuation of the established pattern of development and will not appear visually intrusive or incongruous.

Furthermore, the modest scale of the proposed dwelling, together with the retention of existing landscaping and opportunities for additional planting, will enable the development to integrate successfully within its surroundings. The proposal will therefore preserve the character and appearance of the area and will not result in any material adverse landscape or visual effects.

The proposal represents a well-contained and appropriately scaled form of residential development that respects the landscaped character of the area and integrates successfully into the existing streetscape without causing harm to local landscape character or visual amenity. Accordingly, the development is

considered to comply with the design and landscape objectives of both local and national planning policy.

Statement of community engagement

The applicant is committed to ensuring public engagement takes place for this application. Those living near to the site will be informed of the application proposals by the applicant and questions will be answered if possible.

Heritage Statement

The site lies to the east of the Grade II Listed Milestone on Bath Road (NGR 8195 7902). The milestone derives its significance from its historic association with the Bath Road turnpike network and its continued presence as a surviving roadside feature marking historic travel routes. Its significance is principally historic and evidential in nature, reflecting the development of transportation infrastructure and the evolution of the highway corridor through Knowl Hill. Details of the Listing are below:



MILESTONE AT NGR 8195 7902, BATH ROAD

WARGRAVE BATH ROAD SU 87 NW (south side) Knowl Hill 3/25 Milestone at NGR 8195 : 7902 II Milestone. 1824. Stone chamfered sides on square base.

Incised Roman lettering reads on east face :- To Reading 8 miles Bath 77 on west face :- To Hyde Park Corner 31 miles Maidenhead 5 Colnbrook 14 on the base facing north : Parish of Wargrave 1824.

Listing NGR: SU8195779006

The setting of the listed structure is primarily defined by its relationship with Bath Road, from which its historic function and significance are understood. The surrounding area comprises a mixture of residential, commercial and roadside development, and the asset is experienced within this established and evolving context. Consequently, the significance of the milestone is not dependent upon the application site remaining undeveloped.

The proposed development comprises a single dwelling on land to the east of the listed milestone. The proposal would not physically affect the listed structure, would not interrupt its relationship with Bath Road, and would not obscure important views of the asset. The milestone would remain clearly visible and legible as a historic roadside feature within its established setting.

Given the modest scale of the proposal and the developed character of the surrounding area, the introduction of one dwelling would not materially alter the setting of the listed structure or diminish its evidential, historic or communal value. The proposal would therefore preserve the significance of the Grade II Listed Milestone and its setting, resulting in no harm to the designated heritage asset in accordance with Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Summary

The proposed development represents a sustainable and appropriate form of residential development on a small infill site within the established ribbon of development that characterises this part of Knowl Hill.

Whilst the site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and outside a defined settlement boundary, it comprises a small parcel of land that is physically and visually contained by existing development and does not strongly contribute to the purposes of the Green Belt. The site therefore falls within the definition of Grey Belt land set out in paragraph 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal would deliver a modest single dwelling on a sustainable site and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the wider Green Belt. Consequently, the development should not be regarded as inappropriate development in Green Belt terms.

The proposal would make a positive, albeit modest, contribution towards addressing Wokingham Borough Council's significant housing shortfall at a time when the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. In these circumstances, substantial weight should be afforded to the delivery of an additional dwelling in accordance with the Framework's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes.

The site benefits from access to a range of local services and facilities, together with regular bus services linking Knowl Hill to Twyford, Maidenhead and Reading, and onward access to the wider rail network, including the Elizabeth Line. Future occupiers would therefore have realistic opportunities to access employment, education, retail and leisure facilities by sustainable modes of transport, reducing reliance on the private car. The site consequently represents a sustainable location for residential development.

The proposed dwelling has been carefully designed to respond positively to its surroundings, reflecting the scale, character and appearance of neighbouring development. The scheme represents a low-density form of development that retains the spacious and landscaped character of the site whilst providing a high-quality family dwelling. The proposal would not result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, would preserve the character and appearance of the area, and would retain the site's most important landscape features.

A further material consideration is that the planning and policy context has changed significantly since the previous appeal decision relating to the site was issued in January 2018. Since then, revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework have introduced specific provisions relating to Green Belt land, recognising that certain sites within the Green Belt may not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes and can therefore be suitable locations for development.

As demonstrated throughout this Statement, the application site falls squarely within this category. Furthermore, Wokingham Borough Council is now unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and faces a significant housing shortfall. This substantially alters the planning balance and increases the weight to be afforded to the delivery of sustainable housing development. In parallel, improvements to local bus services and the introduction of the Elizabeth Line have significantly enhanced the accessibility and sustainability credentials of the site compared to those that existed when the previous appeal was determined.

Accordingly, whilst the previous appeal decision remains a material consideration, it was reached within a markedly different policy and factual context. The circumstances that informed that decision have changed significantly, and the current proposal should therefore be assessed on its own merits against current national and local planning policy framework.

Having regard to the Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and all other material considerations, it is concluded that the proposal represents sustainable development for which there is clear policy support. The development accords with the relevant provisions of the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal would deliver an additional dwelling on sustainable Grey Belt land, contributing towards meeting an identified housing need, preserve the openness and function of the wider Green Belt, and do so without giving rise to any unacceptable environmental, landscape, ecological or residential amenity impacts.

For these reasons, there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole. Accordingly, planning permission should be granted without delay.