

Design and Access Statement

Proposed Oak-Framed Double Garage

Site Address: HIGHWOOD, LOWDEN HILL, CHIPPENHAM, SN15 2BT

Pre-application reference: ENQ/2025/00797

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1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of an oak-framed, timber double garage with cedar cladding infill and a tiled roof to match the existing dwelling. The proposal includes a side storage area and provision for an electric vehicle charging point.

The proposed structure is to be sited within the area previously occupied by a mature Beech tree which was removed due to disease. Its removal has resulted in an increased degree of openness; however, it is clear that the neighbour will not have a view of the proposed garage. The proposed garage seeks to restore the sense of enclosure previously provided by the tree, reinstating the original balance and character of the street scene.

The neighbour directly opposite has been approached informally and raised no objections to the proposal.



Fig.1.View from Neighboring Property Opposite

2. Design Rationale and Context

Oak-framed garages and carports are a well-established and characteristic feature within this part of Chippenham. The proposal draws from this vernacular, utilising natural materials and traditional proportions to ensure visual harmony with the surrounding built environment.

The garage has been designed with a low rear eaves height and pitched tiled roof, minimising visual impact from Lowden Hill and preserving views within the Conservation Area. Materials—including oak framing, cedar cladding, and roof tiles—have been chosen to complement the host dwelling and adjacent properties.

The use of renewable timber materials and the provision for an EV charging point reinforce the applicant's commitment to sustainable design.

3. Layout and Siting

The proposed garage will be positioned on existing tarmacadam hardstanding, ensuring minimal ground disturbance. Its footprint (approx. 6m x 6m) lies within the Root Protection Area (RPA) of adjacent trees; however, it does not encroach upon their canopy (dripline). The structure will be constructed using a no-dig foundation system—such as screw piles or a floating raft base—to avoid root severance or soil compaction.

The siting has been carefully considered to:

- Reinstall screening between the site and the opposite dwelling following the Beech tree's removal;
- Reinforce the sense of enclosure along Lowden Hill;
- Maintain adequate visibility splays and access for vehicles;
- Avoid harm to nearby trees and the wider landscape character.

4. Arboricultural Considerations

Following pre-application advice, a Tree Survey, Tree Constraints Plan, and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) with Tree Protection Plan have been submitted in support of this application.

The assessment identifies three trees:

- T1: Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)
- T2: Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)
- T3: Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)

All are to be retained and protected throughout the construction process in accordance with the AMS recommendations. The arboriculturist concludes:

“Provided the trees to be retained are protected throughout the development in accordance with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement, the impact upon the retained trees will be minimised. Consequently, there is unlikely to be any arboricultural impact upon the character of the local area.”

All tree protection measures will be implemented prior to commencement and maintained for

the duration of works, under supervision of the appointed arboriculturist.

To further minimise impact on T1–T3, the garage foundation will employ ground screws, piles, or steel-sleeved mini piles in accordance with best practice (BS 5837:2012).

5. Landscape and Visual Impact

Pre-application feedback identified concerns regarding the potential prominence of the proposed garage within the street scene. In response, a comprehensive native planting scheme has been prepared to soften the visual impact and integrate the development within its setting.

Proposed Planting Scheme

An indigenous mixed hedge is proposed along the corner boundary to screen the garage and enhance biodiversity.

The composition includes:

Core Structural Species (70%)

- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)

Secondary Species (25%)

- Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)
- Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
- Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

Climbers & Groundcover (5%)

- Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*)
- Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*)
- Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

The hedge will be planted in a double staggered row (5–7 plants per linear metre) to ensure rapid establishment. Visualisations at years 1, 3, and 5 demonstrate how the hedge will progressively restore screening and integrate with the existing street scene. These are included in the application.

The proposed hedge mix supports pollinators, provides bird nesting habitat, and reflects the local hedgerow typology characteristic of the area. Wiltshire Council has confirmed that a landscaping plan can be secured via condition.

6. Access and Highways

Vehicular access will remain as existing. Wiltshire Council Highways raised no objections to the proposal at pre-application stage.

The garage includes provision for electric vehicle charging, supporting Wiltshire Council's sustainability and climate objectives. Sufficient turning space will be retained within the site to allow vehicles to enter and exit in forward gear.

No external lighting is proposed to minimise light pollution and protect local amenity. There is no increase to the driveway.

7. Policy Considerations

The proposal has been assessed against relevant planning policies including:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy (Core Policies 57, 58, and 60)
- Wiltshire Design Guide
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) – notably sections relating to good design, biodiversity, and climate change adaptation.

The proposal accords with Core Policy 57 by responding positively to local character and distinctiveness, and with Core Policy 58 through protection of natural features and integration within the landscape setting.

While the Wiltshire Design Guide notes that detached outbuildings located forward of dwellings are generally less desirable, it is considered that this proposal's modest scale, low eaves height, and comprehensive planting scheme mitigate any potential harm. The scheme will not result in adverse impacts on neighbouring properties or the wider Conservation Area.

The planning officer stated that "An application with a landscaping scheme detailing further planting on the corner of the site to reduce the impact of the building may well overcome our concerns."

8. Consultation and Engagement

The applicant intends to attend the relevant meeting of the Chippenham Town Council Planning, Environment and Transport Committee to present the proposal and seek local support.

9. Conclusion

The proposed oak-framed double garage represents a sensitive and contextually appropriate addition to the site, designed to:

- Reinststate visual enclosure and privacy lost following tree removal;
- Complement the established local character through use of natural materials and traditional design;
- Protect nearby trees and ecological features through no-dig foundations and arboricultural

safeguards;

- Mitigate visual impact via a robust, native planting scheme; and
- Support sustainability goals through provision for electric vehicle charging.

Overall, the proposal accords with local and national planning policy and delivers an attractive, environmentally responsible enhancement to the property and wider street scene.

The proposal is modest, well-considered, and fully compliant with the objectives of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and NPPF, delivering a high-quality and sustainable enhancement to the property.