



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** will be held
David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40
1BN on **WEDNESDAY 12 JULY 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', written in a cursive style.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 4 July 2023

Note: Non-Committee Members and members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in line with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams, please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be viewed live using the following link:

<https://youtube.com/live/a6DgH2-80Qk?feature=share>

Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of these images or recordings is not under the Council's control.

Our Vision
<i>A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business</i>
Enriching Lives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion excellent education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background. • Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to enable healthy choices for everyone. • Engage and empower our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity for the Borough which people feel part of. • Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.
Providing Safe and Strong Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people. • Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to reduce the need for long term care. • Nurture our communities: enabling them to thrive and families to flourish. • Ensure our Borough and communities remain safe for all.
Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough, sustainable for the future. • Protect our Borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas for people to enjoy. • Reduce our waste, promote re-use, increase recycling and improve biodiversity. • Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.
Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future. • Ensure the right infrastructure is in place, early, to support and enable our Borough to grow. • Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment. • Help with your housing needs and support people, where it is needed most, to live independently in their own homes.
Keeping the Borough Moving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways. • Tackle traffic congestion and minimise delays and disruptions. • Enable safe and sustainable travel around the Borough with good transport infrastructure. • Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners in offering affordable, accessible public transport with good transport links.
Changing the Way We Work for You
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be relentlessly customer focussed. • Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers. • Communicate better with customers, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough. • Drive innovative, digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.
Be the Best We Can Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an organisation that values and invests in all our colleagues and is seen as an employer of choice. • Embed a culture that supports ambition, promotes empowerment and develops new ways of working. • Use our governance and scrutiny structures to support a learning and continuous improvement approach to the way we do business. • Be a commercial council that is innovative, whilst being inclusive, in its approach with a clear focus on being financially resilient. • Maximise opportunities to secure funding and investment for the Borough. • Establish a renewed vision for the Borough with clear aspirations.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Councillors

David Cornish (Chair)	Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair)	Alistair Neal
Wayne Smith	Michael Firmager	Stuart Munro
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	Tony Skuse	Bill Soane

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
11.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
12.	None Specific	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 June 2023.	5 - 14
13.		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declaration of interest	
14.		APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS To consider any recommendations to defer applications from the schedule and to note any applications that may have been withdrawn.	
15.	Finchampstead North	APPLICATION NUMBER 223256 OAK DALE LOWER WOKINGHAM ROAD CROWTHORNE RG45 6BX RECOMMENDATION: Conditional Approval subject to legal agreement.	15 - 86

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following abbreviations were used in the above Index and in reports.

C/A	Conditional Approval (grant planning permission)
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
R	Refuse (planning permission)
LB	(application for) Listed Building Consent
S106	Section 106 legal agreement between Council and applicant in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
F	(application for) Full Planning Permission
MU	Members' Update circulated at the meeting
RM	Reserved Matters not approved when Outline Permission previously granted
VAR	Variation of a condition/conditions attached to a previous approval

PS
Category Performance Statistic Code for the Planning Application

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 14 JUNE 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.12 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Wayne Smith, Michael Firmager, Stuart Munro, Tony Skuse and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Committee Members in Attendance Virtually

Councillor David Cornish

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Pauline Jorgensen

Officers Present

Gordon Adam, Principal Highways Development Control Officer
Brian Conlon, Operational Lead - Development Management
Lyndsay Jennings, Senior Solicitor
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Connie Davis
Benjamin Hindle
Marcus Watts

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey proposed that David Cornish be elected Chair for the 2023/24 municipal year. This was seconded by Alistair Neal.

RESOLVED That David Cornish be elected Chair for the 2023/24 municipal year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Alistair Neal proposed that Andrew Mickleburgh be appointed Vice-Chair for the 2023/24 municipal year. This was seconded by Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey.

RESOLVED That Andrew Mickleburgh be appointed Vice-Chair for the 2023/24 municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Bill Soane.

Councillor David Cornish attended the meeting virtually, meaning he could participate in the debate but not vote.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 May 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chair in the Chair.

5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Alistair Neal declared a personal interest in Item 7, application number 221797, "Crockers", Rushey Way, on the grounds that the application site was situated within his Ward and he was a Member of the Earley Town Council Planning Committee which had

discussed this application. Alistair stated that that he would consider all information and representations before forming a view, and approached the meeting with an open mind.

6. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

No applications were recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

7. APPLICATION NO.221797 - "CROCKERS", RUSHEY WAY, EARLEY

Proposal: Outline application with all matters reserved for the proposed erection of 9 no. dwellings following demolition of the existing dwelling.

Applicant: Mrs C Burrows

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 15 to 60.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Clarity regarding existing trees and landscape features on site;
- Clarity regarding that many matters of objection were in relation to reserved matters.

Caroline Smith, Earley Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. Caroline thanked the Committee for undertaking a site visit as requested at the previous meeting, which allowed the Committee to better understand the context of the site including highways issues, traffic, access, trees and landscaping, and the amenity of existing residents. Caroline stated that the Earley Town Council Planning Committee had recommended refusal of this application as per the comments set out within the Committee's agenda pack. Caroline stated that the Borough needed the right homes in the right places, however that was not the case for this application. Caroline commented that as this application was only indicative, it could result in nine 3-storey properties as a worst case scenario. Caroline added that she could not see evidence of each of the concerns raised by the Highways department being fully addressed. Caroline noted that Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) drainage department had raised a concern in relation to surface water drainage, and questioned how the guidance within the NPPF would be followed to avoid flooding at numbers 23 and 25 Beauchief Close. Caroline raised concern that there was no information provided as to how the seven TPO trees would be protected, whilst the officer report noted that it was very likely that one or more would have to be felled to facilitate the development. Caroline questioned how biodiversity would be improved or even maintained when sixty-percent of the site would be built over. Caroline noted that affordable homes in the right locations needed to be developed within the Borough, however this site was not appropriate. If approved, Caroline asked that the Committee set very firm conditions that needed to be met under reserved matters, in particular a limit of nine dwellings.

Sandra Shaw, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Sandra thanked the Committee for undertaking a site visit. Sandra commented that the site was not a major development location, as it was a major development location in the 1980s and was now fully developed without the necessary infrastructure to sustain further development. Sandra stated that residents understood the nature of outline and reserved matters applications, however they could only be expected to comment on what they could see. Sandra added that some Members had previously felt it unfortunate that this was an

outline application, as it would approve the principle of development in the absence of detail. Sandra stated that there was a deep sense of concern regarding access to the site, and questioned why a minor reduction to the number of dwellings would make a 5m wide access acceptable. Sandra felt that the applicant should be required to show an indicative layout whereby TPO trees would be retained. Sandra stated that there were no three-storey dwellings surrounding the site, meaning any such properties would be out of character with the surrounding area. Sandra was of the opinion that demolishing the existing property and failing to protect the hedgerow would go against measures to protect and enhance biodiversity whilst being contrary to WBC's declaration of a climate emergency. Sandra asked that the application be refused.

Daniel Thompson, agent, spoke in support of the application. Daniel stated that this was an outline application which required a site location plan, site block plan and a proposed site plan. Daniel added that the level of detail required for such applications was kept deliberately small to allow the applicant to establish the principle of development, leaving all other matters to be determined at the reserved matters stage. Despite this, Daniel stated that a design and access document, supplementary comments and clarifications, indications of impacted TPO trees and indication of biodiversity net gain measures had been provided. Daniel added that a two for one replacement of trees would be provided. Daniel stated that between 2 and 3 affordable units would be provided in line with WBC's policy requirements, contrary to the NPPF requirements. Daniel added that an outline application was a perfectly legitimate application, and prejudice of whether such applications were liked or preferable should not form part of the decision making process. Daniel stated that this application was about establishing a baseline and a maximum number of houses, and the applicant had worked closely with officers to achieve a site which would deliver a maximum of nine homes which provided affordable housing and addressed highways matters to the level required for an outline application. Daniel urged the Committee to approve the application.

Pauline Jorgensen, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Pauline stated that there were a number of serious concerns in relation to this application. Pauline commented that the proposed access would not meet highways standards, whilst being narrow with no pavement would make it very difficult for refuse vehicles or emergency vehicles to access the site. Pauline raised concerns over the loss of TPO trees, which was required for the access to the site to be widened. Pauline stated that Rushey Way was not a quiet residential, road, and it was essential that visibility splays were correctly implemented. Pauline felt that the site was cramped, with three gardens failing to meet standards, and questioned how having one larger garden plot negated other plots being below standard. Pauline stated that it was essential that existing properties were not overlooked by the proposed development. Pauline asked that the application be refused, as the site was cramped, had unsuitable access which did not adhere to highways standards, would result in the loss of mature TPO trees, and would deliver nine houses too many for the area.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey sought clarity regarding the affordable housing contribution and the status of WBC's five-year housing land supply. Benjamin Hindle, case officer, stated that there was nothing in place to secure an affordable housing contribution, whilst the NPPF only required a contribution for developments of 10 units and above. Benjamin confirmed that WBC could not demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and eight dwellings was significant enough to tilt the balance of this application.

Michael Firmager questioned how the application demonstrated that it would not be overbearing or detrimental to the surrounding area. Benjamin Hindle confirmed that scale, layout and design were issues to be considered at the reserved matters stage.

Wayne Smith queried whether a 35 percent contribution towards affordable housing would be required for this application. Benjamin Hindle stated that recent appeal decisions had shown that Inspectors felt that policy CP6 was out of date, and the NPPF had to take precedence in such situations which did not require a contribution for developments of under 10 properties. Benjamin added that it was a risk-based exercise for the Committee to consider requiring affordable housing for this application.

Wayne Smith sought clarity as to whether some trees would need to be felled to enable access to be developed. Benjamin Hindle confirmed that whilst this was likely the case, detail would be provided at the reserved matters stage should the outline application be approved. Wayne sought clarity as to why the proposed access offset was acceptable when it contravened WBC policy. Gordon Adam, Principal Highway Development Control Officer, stated that this access would be a private access whilst existing access should be viewed 'in the round'. Gordon added that access could not be moved due to the nature of the site, and officers were of the opinion that access would be acceptable subject to conditions and further detail at the reserved matters stage. Gordon stated that the pavement part of the access would likely be adopted, whilst the road was likely to remain unadopted.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried why a 30m junction offset was usually required. Gordon Adam stated that such an offset was to minimise the interaction between traffic between one minor junction and another. Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether there was any guidance as to when the requirement for a 30m offset should apply. Gordon Adam stated that officers assessed each application 'in the round' against a range of factors. This site was for a maximum of 9 dwellings which would equate to approximately 5 vehicle trips in the peak hour compared to much higher trip rates on Rushey Way and Tiptree Close. Gordon stated that this access would not represent a junction, but instead just access to a minor development site.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried how a refuse vehicle might access the site. Gordon Adam stated that this would be dealt with at the reserved matters stage, however should a refuse lorry be unable to access the site then a bin collection store could be included near the access to the site.

Wayne Smith sought clarity on the definition of the site and land. Benjamin Hindle confirmed that the site comprised of previously developed land within a major development location.

There was some discussion regarding affordable housing contribution. At this point of the meeting, Daniel Thompson, agent, stated that his understanding from an email conversation with the previous case officer was for 2 of the front facing units to Rushey Way to be delivered as affordable housing units.

Wayne Smith queried where waste would be stored and collected as his understanding from other sites was that refuse vehicles would not use unadopted roads due to insurance liabilities. Benjamin Hindle stated that refuse vehicles should be able to use unadopted roads, and cited such instances at other sites in the Borough.

Michael Firmager raised concern over the potential of a communal bin store being accessed by a refuse lorry on the main road, which could take a considerable amount of time leading to highway safety concerns.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried how details and plans would be developed to address issues raised by residents and Members should the outline application be approved. Benjamin Hindle confirmed that the applicant would work with officers, and any future reserved matters application could be considered by the Planning Committee. Benjamin added that a further consultation would be carried out for any future reserved matters application.

It was noted that there was considerable interest in this application returning to the Committee should it progress to the reserved matters stage. Given this, Benjamin Hindle confirmed that the case officer for the reserved matters stage would be instructed to send details of the final proposal to the Committee to allow it to be called in and considered.

Brian Conlon, Operational Lead – Development Management, provided clarity with regards to affordable housing contributions. Brian stated that the original application was for 10 units, which would have required affordable housing. The scheme was subsequently amended to a maximum of nine units, which fell below the national requirement for affordable housing contributions whilst local policies still required such a contribution. Recent appeal decisions for developments of five to ten units had left WBC unable to successfully argue that such schemes should be refused on the basis of lack of affordable housing contribution. A viability assessment had not been carried out for this site, and for officers to insist on affordable housing contributions would require officers to be prepared to defend a refusal based on a lack of affordable housing provision. Brian added that whilst the agent had declared intent to deliver two affordable units, the viability assessment could show that it was not viable to provide any such contribution. Brian confirmed that the application was acceptable to officers in the absence of affordable housing contributions.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the Committee could require provision of affordable housing, subject to viability. Brian Conlon stated that the Committee was at liberty to amend the recommendation. Brian added that any such requirement would be subject to legal agreement and viability.

Wayne Smith was of the opinion that the Committee had been placed in a difficult position whereby they were being asked to approve the principle of development for a site where he could identify a range of issues, such as access and landscaping. Wayne felt that the only option left open to the Committee was to scrutinise any future reserved matters application thoroughly.

Andrew Mickleburgh commented that he had found the site visit extraordinarily useful to help understand the context of the site and its surroundings. Andrew added that nothing he had seen, considered or heard had led him to believe that it was impossible for the site to accommodate nine homes. Andrew added that the site was located within a sustainable area, and noted that any reserved matters application would be considered in detail by the Committee.

Andrew Mickleburgh proposed that the application be approved in line with the officer recommendation, subject to provision of affordable housing secured via S106 agreement subject to viability, with the detailed wording of the S106 agreement to be agreed in conjunction with the Chair and Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Tony Skuse.

RESOLVED That application number 221797 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 46 to 50, and subject to provision of affordable housing secured via S106 agreement subject to viability, with the detailed wording of the s106 agreement to be agreed in conjunction with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

8. APPLICATION NO.203617 - RIVERSIDE PARK, WOOSEHILL, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full application for proposed works to reconnect a 340 metre length of historic river channel of the Emm Brook through Riverside Park, to bypass the existing weir. With associated excavation, silt removal/storage and landscaping works, plus the erection of 2 no. 8 metre x 3.5 metre wooden bridges to maintain existing access for pedestrians and maintenance vehicles, following removal of an existing piped culvert.

Applicant: South East Rivers Trust

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 61 to 362.

The Committee were advised that there were no updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

Nick Hale, applicant, spoke in support of the application. Nick stated that a huge amount of work had gone into this application, with a range of local groups being involved. Nick added that the Rivers Trust was an independent organisation, and the South East Rivers Trust was responsible for a wide range of river catchments. Nick stated that there were opportunities for engagement and education sessions as a result of the proposal. Nick stated that the applicant had delivered a number of successful projects within the South East. Nick cited a successful project carried out on the Charvil Meadows, and noted issues related to the Loddon catchment included low flows.

Michael Firmager stated that he had enjoyed reading the agenda paperwork, and sought confirmation that the proposed works would not make any flooding issues worse. Benjamin Hindle, case officer, stated that the Environment Agency no longer had any objections with the scheme, whilst the second channel would lead to improvements in terms of flood risk management.

Michael Firmager queried whether there would be any protections for existing animals within the pond. Benjamin Hindle stated that the Council's ecology officer had considered the application in detail and had raised no objections. In addition, the applicant was committed to ensuring minimal impacts on existing species, including delivering elements of the scheme out of season if required.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried whether the foul sewer system would be modified as a result of the proposals. Benjamin Hindle stated that Thames Water had been consulted on this matter, and they had resolved to add a connecting section to the existing pipeline.

Andrew Mickleburgh thanked officers for the very comprehensive report. Andrew welcomed the close working relationship between the applicant, external agencies, volunteer organisations and the wider community.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey proposed an additional informative, requesting that the applicant consider installing a commemorative plaque on the site to recognise the history

of the original diversion to facilitate the operation of a mill. This was seconded by Tony Skuse, carried, and added to the list of informatives.

Wayne Smith proposed that the application be approved in line with the officer recommendation and additional informative in relation to the request for the installation of a commemorative plaque as resolved by the Committee. This was seconded by Tony Skuse.

RESOLVED That application number 203617 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 82 to 87, and additional informative requesting that the applicant consider installing a commemorative plaque on the site to recognise the history of the original diversion to facilitate the operation of a mill, as resolved by the Committee.

9. APPLICATION NO.230743 - LIBRARY PARADE, WOODLEY

Proposal: Full application for the proposed creation of a mixed use building consisting of the retention of the existing 3 no. retail stores at ground floor level and the addition of 14 no. apartments on new first, second and third floor levels, including the erection of three and four storey rear extensions with associated car parking, cycle and bin stores, following partial demolition of the existing building.

Applicant: Mr Hardeep Hans

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 363 to 410.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Clarification that the two accessible units were located on the first and second floors;
- Clarification that all 10 car parking spaces were intended to have facilities for electric vehicle charging;
- Clarification that overall 21 cycle stands would be available for residents and retail stores combined.

Bruce Chappell, resident, submitted a statement in objection to the application. In his absence, the statement was read out by the Vice-Chair in the Chair. Bruce stated that he owned and lived with his daughter in one of the flats above the Lidl building which was directly opposite Library Parade.

Bruce stated that he continued to voice his opposition to this development on the grounds of encroachment of his privacy. Bruce noted that the developer had made an attempt to negate the encroachment of privacy to his windows and patio doors, which were bedrooms and a lounge, but this had not taken into consideration his privacy when it came to the use of the balcony. Bruce stated that this was his only outdoor space and was used often, and was one of the reasons for purchasing the flat. The balcony was just under 2 metres in depth and as a consequence when in use was within 10 metres away from the windows on the proposed development. Bruce added that he exercised, socialised, sunbathed, and hung up laundry on the balcony, which would be in clear view of the proposed development. Bruce felt it was inadequate to draw a straight line of sight from one window to another, as it was not a good way of ascertaining privacy and boundaries. Bruce stated

that people did not simply look straight ahead. Bruce commented that should the lines be drawn from all of the proposed windows to his balcony railing, it would clearly detail the issue of developing too close to an existing building. Bruce stated that he would be able to look down and see into various rooms of the proposed develop and vice versa. Bruce commented that outdoor space was so important to health and well-being, and he hoped that the Council would protect his privacy so he could continue to enjoy this space.

Joseph Baum, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in support of the application. Joseph stated that the applicant had truly listened to the community after the Committee had refused the previous application based on concerns relating to overlooking. Joseph stated that the proposal in front of the Committee responded to these concerns by reducing the number of units from 16 to 14, with two units from the top floor being removed whilst no top floor units would face Sandford Court. Joseph stated that separation distances between the existing and proposed building of between 15m and 15.2m exceeded Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) guidelines. Joseph added that privacy screens would be included on both balconies, which was in keeping with similar balconies within the Sandford Court development. Joseph commented that the application would make use of an existing brownfield site within a sustainable town centre location, reducing the need to deliver homes in less sustainable locations. Joseph stated that the application promoted sustainable travel and would deliver energy efficient homes which could achieve over a 65 percent reduction in CO₂ emissions. Joseph added that the development would retain the existing retail units whilst delivering 14 much needed one and two bedroom homes, including two wheelchair accessible units. Joseph concluded by stating that the application would also deliver £166k of affordable housing contributions, and urged the Committee to approve the application.

Tony Skuse commented his appreciation that the applicant had taken into consideration previous concerns and had made improvements to the proposed scheme. Tony was of the opinion that it would not be unreasonable to live in such an arrangement within a built up urban environment. Tony queried whether there would be sufficient parking for workers of the retail units. Connie Davis, case officer, stated that the site would deliver 10 parking space, with 5 for the retail units and 5 for the residential units inclusive of 2 allocated spaces for the two disabled residential units. Connie added that the rest of the development was car free, which was deemed acceptable by officers given the sustainable town centre location.

Stuart Munro queried how much parking provision was available to the retail units via existing arrangements. Connie Davis stated that the current parking arrangements were not formalised, and there were up to 18 vehicles parked at any one time. At present there were no parking bays, and the proposed development would introduce a formalised arrangement to parking and was deemed acceptable.

Wayne Smith queried how an affordable housing contribution of £166k equated to 2.8 units. Connie Davis stated that this calculation was carried out by the affordable housing team, whilst a payment was preferable when less than 4 affordable units were to be delivered as fewer units were less attractive to registered housing providers.

Wayne Smith commented that the Committee needed a more thorough oversight as to how such calculations were carried out. Brian Conlon, Operational Lead – Development Management, stated that the Local Plan allowed for on site provision or an offsite commuted sum. Brian added that the contribution amount was not based on the market price of a unit, but a percentage value of an affordable unit. Brian added that the

calculations went into much greater detail. Brian clarified that it was unlikely that a registered housing provider would be attracted to manage 3 units at one site as they preferred greater numbers of units on larger development sites. Wayne Smith was of the opinion that this was a very sustainable site for affordable housing provision.

Andrew Mickleburgh commented that this was a good example of an applicant and WBC working together to address concerns which had led to an earlier refusal.

Andrew Mickleburgh proposed that the application be approved in line with the officer recommendation. This was seconded by Tony Skuse.

RESOLVED That application number 230743 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 385 to 391.

10. APPLICATION NO.230283 - OAK APPLES, OAKLANDS LANE, CROWTHORNE, RG45 6JX

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 6 no. dwellings with associated landscaping, parking and means of access following the demolition of the existing dwelling.

Applicant: Palatine Homes

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 411 to 444.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Summarised comments from the Council's Ecology Officer;
- Additional conditions 20 and 21;
- Amendment to Informative 1.

Stuart Shafran, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Stuart stated that the site was classified as designated woodland, with a woodland TPO covering the entire site. Despite these protections, Stuart stated that the community was faced with yet another unpopular and inappropriate development proposal. Stuart stated that access to the proposed site was via a single lane byway next to a school, where there had been a history of near misses. Stuart added that the proposed development site was located directly opposite a school, whilst noise and dust as a result of the development would cause a significant impact to pupils. Stuart stated that there was no management plan in place to mitigate against construction impacts. Stuart stated that the biodiversity net gain statement within the ecology report was only valid where the remaining woodland was retained and managed properly, and was of the opinion that the woodland management plan could not possibly be applied to private gardens. Stuart cited Government guidelines that stated biodiversity offsetting should only be used as a last resort in exceptional circumstances. Stuart stated that parking for residents and visitors of this properties would be problematic, with only three spaces being provided for a 4-bedroom house, and no provision for visitors, leading to cars being parked on the byway leading to yet further safety issues. Stuart stated that the last ecological survey was carried out many years ago, whilst there was no highways safety report associated with the application. Stuart was of

the opinion that the previous application should not have been approved, whilst an additional two dwellings would compound issues. Stuart felt that what was required was an alternative scheme, delivering one or at most two houses whilst retaining the existing woodland.

Steven Brown, agent, spoke in support of the application. Steven stated that for a site of this size, within development limits, it had a disproportionately long planning history which would be concluded via grant of planning permission. Steven stated that the applicant would bring six much needed family homes in a verdant setting, which respected the character of the area. Steven added that the application would include root protection measures, ecological buffers, and would respect the amenity of neighbouring property and visual amenity enjoyed along Oaklands Lane. Steven stated that the proposal for six dwellings would make more efficient use of the site via provision of smaller dwellings with lower ridge heights. Steven added that the applicant was a privately owned development company focussed on delivering high quality and bespoke schemes such as this. Stephen noted that the applicant now owned the site and were eager implement the scheme if granted planning permission. Steven stated that the scheme represented a collaborative approach, with no technical objections from any statutory consultees, whilst this was the exact type of scheme encouraged by policies. Steven commented that concerns regarding vehicular traffic had been comprehensively addressed within the officer report, whilst the application would deliver an affordable housing contribution and elective vehicle charging, whilst retaining the existing boundary trees and ecological buffers.

Andrew Mickleburgh noted the additional comments from the Council's ecology officer and associated conditions and amended informative as set out within the supplementary planning agenda. Andrew noted that the principle of development had already been established.

Alistair Neal sought clarity as to whether the original scheme had been called into Committee. Marcus Watts, case officer, confirmed that the original decision had been made via the officer scheme of delegation.

Wayne Smith queried how many trees would be lost within the woodland protection area to facilitate the development. Marcus Watts stated that every tree on site was covered by a TPO, whilst only three trees which were dead or in decaying health were to be removed. Marcus added that the number of trees to be planted would exceed the trees felled.

Andrew Mickleburgh proposed that the application be approved in line with the officer recommendation and additional conditions and amended informatives as set out within the supplementary planning agenda. This was seconded by Alistair Neal.

RESOLVED That application number 230283 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 429 to 435, additional conditions 20 and 21 and amended informative 1 as set out within the supplementary planning agenda.

Agenda Item 15.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
223256	20 July 2023	Finchampstead	Finchampstead North;

Applicant	Mr Simeon Batov, 565 High Road Leytonstone London E11 4PB
Site Address	Oak Dale Lower Wokingham Road Crowthorne Wokingham RG45 6BX
Proposal	Full application for the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of 60-bedroom care home (use class C2), with associated access, parking and landscaping.
Type	Full
Officer	Senjuti Manna
Reason for determination by committee	Major application

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 12 July 2023
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place and Growth

RECOMMENDATION	<p>i) APPROVAL subject to conditions and Informatives & completion of S106 legal agreement to secure planning obligations.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>ii) Refuse full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed within three months of the date of this resolution unless officers (on behalf of the Assistant Director – Place and Growth) agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement.</p> <p>The S106 to include the following head of terms:</p> <p><u>Affordable Bedspaces</u></p> <p>To secure two beds at a market rate determined by Wokingham Council Adult Social Care, but for no less than £950/ week. This will be reviewed after 5 years of the first occupation of the development hereby approved.</p> <p><u>Employment Skills Plan</u></p> <p>To secure a construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan or equivalent financial contribution in accordance with Policy TB12 of the MDD and based on the value of the Construction Industry Training Board Benchmark.</p>
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SUMMARY

This application relates to the property Oak Dale, Lower Wokingham Road, Crowthorne and located within designate countryside. The proposal is for the erection of a 60-bedroom care home (Use Class C2) and associated services following the demolition of the existing dwelling and associated outbuildings.

The application site consists of a residential dwelling and garden located within designated countryside. The demolition of the dwelling and erection of a care home will be contrary to policy CP11, thus unacceptable in principle. However, due to the site's existing character, size, location and siting of the proposed building, the harm arising from the policy conflict will be limited. Additionally, the proposal will deliver specialist accommodation for older people and there is in principle policy support for such developments in both national and local policies including Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan. The site is considered moderately sustainable, and the applicant has agreed to provide planning obligations relating to improving pedestrian route that will be secure by s106 legal agreement.

The quantum of development, proposed layout and building design are considered appropriate in terms of the nature and grain of development of the surrounding area. The building design is sensible. The proposal demonstrates some characteristics in support of climate change mitigation and adaptation including an excellent approach to materials, however, at present the approach to energy is poor, with insufficient effort to reduce energy demand in line with the energy hierarchy through the use of a fabric-first approach. Evidence submitted indicates scope for improvements to the sustainable development strategy which can be secured by appropriate planning conditions.

The location of the proposed access is acceptable and subject to appropriate conditions, there is no highway safety and parking concerns. Whilst the proposal involves removal of 20 trees, the replacement planting can be secured by condition and no objection is raised. In terms of visual impact on the landscape character, the change within the existing landscape will be moderate but due to the contained nature of the site and retention of boundary vegetation, the resulting harm will be limited. The proposal will not result in any significant negative impact on biodiversity including priority habitat and subject to appropriate condition securing biodiversity enhancement, no objection on ecology ground is raised.

Whilst there is no policy requirement for provision of affordable beds, the developer has agreed to provide 2 bedspaces at a rate determined by the Council at the time of first occupation of the building. This will be reviewed after 5 years. This is acceptable and adds weight to the proposal's benefits.

The NPPF is clear that where development does not result in significant harm and is sustainable, it should be supported. The proposal achieves wider compliance with the overall spatial and social objectives of the NPPF by boosting the supply of specialist accommodation in a moderately sustainable location within the borough which will also count towards the Council's 5-year housing land supply (HLS).

When applying the tilted balance, as advocated by paragraph 11d(ii) of the NPPF, the limited and localised harm caused by the conflict with development plan in terms of location of development outside any defined settlement limits and associated impact on the character of the area is considered to not significantly and adversely outweigh those identified benefits

associated with provision of specialist care home within an accessible location. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions listed in this report and successful completion of a s106 legal agreement to secure employment skills plan, and affordable bedspaces.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application Number	Description	Decision & Date
541/53	Outline application for residential development	Refused 16/12/1953
g42/54	Outline application for a bungalow	Approved 12/03/1954
292/55	Bungalow	Approved 24/05/1955
624/56	Vehicular access	Approved 11/09/1956
1404/71	Double garage	Approved 30/12/1971
424/72	Additions	Approved 13/04/1972
15842	First floor extension	Approved 26/08/1981
20782	1.8m high boundary fence	Refused 09/02/1984
23464	1.2m high boundary fencing	Approved 23/05/1985
F/1999/69071	Two storey side extension to dwelling	Approved 24/03/1999
F/2001/4679	First floor front extension to dwelling	Approved 01/10/2001

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

Proposed units	60 bedrooms (equivalent to 33.3 C3 units)
Proposed density - dwellings/hectare	Equivalent to 36.6 dph
Number of affordable units proposed	2 bedspaces at a rate required by the Council
Previous land use	Residential
Existing parking spaces	4
Proposed parking spaces	29 (including 3 no. disabled bays; 1 ambulance parking)
CONSTRAINTS	Designated Countryside Water Utility Consultation Zone Green Route Heathrow Aerodrome Consultation Zone Farmborough Aerodrome Consultation Zone Bat Roost Habitat Suitability SSSI Impact Risk Zone Landscape Character Assessment Area M1: 'Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands' Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area Mitigation Zone (400m - 5km) Nitrate vulnerable zone (groundwater) Flood Zone 1 Risk of Surface Water Flooding (at the rear of the site) Archaeological Site

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
WBC Adult Social Care	Objected to the proposal due to lack of affordable housing contributions. (Officer note: There is no policy requirement for provision of affordable housing for a Use Class C2 scheme).
WBC Ecology	No objections subject to conditions
WBC Highways	No objections subject to conditions
WBC Trees and Landscape	No objections subject to conditions
WBC Green Infrastructure	No comments to make
WBC Environmental Health	No objections subject to conditions
WBC Planning Policy	Requested additional information from Adult Services Commissioning team
WBC Drainage	No objections subject to condition
WBC Public Right of Way	No objections
Natural England	No objections subject to securing appropriate mitigations
Thames Water	No objections on Foul Water and Surface Water grounds
Berkshire Archaeology	No objections subject to condition
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service	No objections subject to
NHS Integrated Care Board	Sought clarification on the type of care home.

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council:

Finchampstead Parish Council:

Objected to the proposal on following grounds:

- Overdevelopment of the site
- The site is within an unsustainable location
- A three-storey building outside of the SDLs or Gorse Ride is not supported by the emerging Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy D1.
- Insufficient parking onsite which may lead to parking on the road.
- Negative impact of additional traffic on Lower Wokingham Road.

Wokingham Without Parish Council:

Objected to the proposal on following grounds:

- The scale of the building is excessive compared to the residential surrounding
- The parking provision and management of parking areas has not been adequately addressed.
- The effect of the proposed development on neighbouring properties including overlooking, light pollution, noise disturbance, odour disturbance and waste management.
- Impact on site-wide use, e.g., staff / visitor / delivery traffic, particularly in rush hours/ school opening/ closing and after 6pm.

- The impact on community infrastructure management and mitigation, e.g., doctor surgeries and healthcare.

Local Members:

Cllr Charles Margetts (of Finchampstead North ward)

Objected on following grounds:

- The development of a large multi-storey care home will be out of character with the area which includes 1 and 2 storey detached houses with mature gardens.
- The development will result in significant loss of trees and natural habitat, detrimentally harming the biodiversity of the area.
- The site is not a sustainable location as it is not easily accessible by public transport. The future users of the development will be overly reliant on private motor vehicles. There are other, more sustainable sites available for this development.
- Wokingham already have 53 care homes. It does not need another.
- The current site is a residential house. The current proposal would see the site experience 24-hour activity resulting in noise, and light pollution.

Cllr Peter Harper (of Finchampstead North ward)

Objected to the proposal on following grounds:

- The proposal will be contrary to policy CP11 part 5 which states that in the case of replacement dwelling, the proposal must not result in inappropriate increase in scale, form or footprint of the original building.
- The proposal is over 10 times the volume of the existing building and would dominate the site.
- The proposal will result in loss of privacy for adjoining properties.
- There is a highway safety concern with significant amount of additional traffic on an already busy road. There will potentially be additional congestion resulting from traffic waiting to turn into the site.

Cllr Pauline Helliard-Symons (of Wokingham Without ward):

Objections on following grounds:

- Traffic from this development will cause highway safety issues as Lower Wokingham Road regularly experiences high-speed traffic.

Neighbours:

The application was consulted with neighbours between 29 November 2022 and 03 February 2023. 141 representations were received both supporting and objecting to the proposal.

SUPPORT:

Comments received from occupiers of the following properties:

Oak Dale RG45 6BX; Monterey, Roman Ride RG45 6BU; Porth Hellick RG45 6BU; no house number Roman Ride RG45 6BU; and 7 Pine Copse Park RG40 3GH supporting the application on following grounds:

Need:

- The proposal includes high-quality bedrooms with en-suite. The area has an increasing number of ageing populations. Increasing the care home choices will be beneficial.
- Dementia is a major old-age problem. The proposed care home will provide dementia care. This type of facility is required in this area.

Locational suitability:

- The site is an ideal location for a care home, being close to the green space "Simon's wood" and provides opportunities for family walking.
- This is a sustainable location, it is located within walking distance of the shops, train station and green spaces.
- There are other sites near the current application site that have been proposed for residential development in Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Highways:

- Reduction of speed to 30mph in front of the site and inclusion of pedestrian crossing would help in improving road safety.

(Officer note: As there are no apparent highway safety issues with this stretch of Lower Wokingham Road there would be limited support from the police to reduce the speed limit to 30mph).

Other:

- The proposal will be a valuable community facility
- The applicant can consider funding the improvements on Lower Wokingham Road which would benefit both the existing communities and the users of the proposed development.
- The submission includes artist's impressions that demonstrate that the building will hardly be visible from the road.

Additionally, proforma support letters were received from the residents of the following properties:

Bridge Wood Nine Mile Ride RG40 3LU; 12 Shepherds Way RG45 6AS; 12 Priors Wood Crowthorne; 12 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 65 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 16 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 36 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 40 The Brambles RG45 6EF; 9 Grove Close RG40 3NA; 32 The Brambles RG45 6EF; 38b Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 3 Salamanca RG45 6AP; 26 Kingsbridge Cottages RG40 3LY; 19 The Brambles RG45 6EF; 46 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 53 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 5 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 83 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AR; 58 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 16 Bramley Grove RG45 6EB; 6 Salamanca RG45 6AP; 25 The Brambles RG45 6EF; 63 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 15 Kingsbridge Cottages RG40 3LY; 58 The Brambles RG45 6EF; 53 The Brambles RG45

6EF; 3 New Acres RG40 3LZ; 67 The Brambles RG45 6EF; 5 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 31 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 15 Greenrside RG45 6EX; 5 Kingsbridge Cottages RG40 3LY; 3 Bramley Grove RG45 6EB; 29 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 40 Wellesley Drive RG45 6AL; 10 Salamanca RG45 6AP; 1 Knowles Avenue RG45 6AY; 36 Linkway RG45 6ES; 2 Kingsbridge Cottages RG40 3LY; 1 Kingsbridge Cottages RG40 3LY; 15 Bramley Grove RG45 6EB; 11 Priors Wood RG45 6BZ.

The proforma letters supported the application on following grounds:

- 60 high-quality single bedrooms with accessible ensuite wet rooms for local older people

(Officer note: There is no mechanism to ensure that the residents of the care home will come from local area).

- 24-hour on-site care for residents will help to reduce demand for local health facilities and adult social services.
- Employing 20 full-time staff with up to 14 staff on site at any one time.
- 24 on-site parking spaces

(Officer note: This is a requirement for a development of this type).

- Jobs for local people during the construction phase
- There is significant local need for additional high-quality care home beds and specialist care beds, as the population ages and dependency rates increase.

OBJECTION:

Representations received from the residents of following properties:

No house no. Lower Wokingham Road RG45 6BX; No house no. Bramley Grove RG45 6EB; Stamford Heath Ride RG40 3QJ; 4 Kingfisher Chase RG12 8EX; Briarleigh Lower Wokingham Road RG45 6DB; 18 The Brambles; 51 Simons Lane RG41 3HG; 19 Grovelands Avenue RG41 5JU; No house number, The Brambles, RG45 6EF; No house number, Houston Way RG45 6BY; Pine Drive, Lower Wokingham Road RG45 6BX; 6 Dexter Way RG41 5GR; The Squirrels, Nine Mile Ride RG40 3DY; 34 Cherry Tree Road, Didcot OX11 6DG; Birch Grove, Lower Wokingham Road RG45 6DB; Woodhaven, Roman Ride RG45 6BU; Westwood, Houston Way RG45 6BY; 37 The Brambles RG45 6EF; 21 The Brambles RG45 6EF; Pine Cottage, Lower Wokingham Road RG45 6DB; 25 Ashdale Park RG40 3QS; 13 Oaklands Drive RG41 2SA; Glenrise, Lower Wokingham Road RG45 6DB; West Heath House, Lower Wokingham Road RG45 6BX; Neil Davis Planning (on behalf of West Heath House and Pine Drive); Bramley Dene, Lower Wokingham Road, RG45 6DB; Pages Croft RG40 2HN; Chasleton, Lower Wokingham Road, RG45 6DB; Tawny Hollow, Warren Lane Finchampstead RG40 4HR; Malden House Lower Wokingham Road RG45 6BX; Appletree Lodge, Lower Wokingham Road, RG45 6DB; Tudor Gables, Lower Wokingham Road, RG45 6DB; 16 Venetia Close, Reading RG4 8UG; 17 Boyne Mead Road, Winchester SO23 7QZ; Birchwood Farm, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 6DT; The Rambles, Lower Wokingham Road, RG45 6DB; Honister Lodge, Lower Wokingham Road RG45 6DB; 1 Lavenham Drive, Woodley RG5 4PP; 92 Farm Road, Maidenhead SL6 5JF; 17 Hatch Ride, RG45 6LF; 20 Blackbird Place, Bracknell RG12 8BQ; 351 Finchampstead Road, Finchampstead RG40 3JU; 3 Astley Close, Wokingham RG41 3HS; Evesham, Houston Way RG45 6BY; Ashcroft House, Lower Wokingham Road, RG45 6BX.

Objections received on following grounds:

Principle of development:

- The site is outside of settlement limits. The proposal will not maintain separate identity of settlements and quality of environment.

(Officer note: The proposal will replace one existing building with another. Whilst the replacement building will be larger than the existing, it will not result in coalescence of two settlements as the existing plot will not be amended).

- Policy CP11 states that the development should not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; replacement buildings should bring about environmental improvements and not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. The proposal would be contrary to these requirements.
- The proposal does not have any environmental improvements and would not comply with the exceptions set within policy CP11.
- The proposal will change a residential building into commercial which is not appropriate for this section of the Lower Wokingham Road where single-family residential properties are predominant.

Character of the area:

- Lower Wokingham Road effectively forms a boundary between two very different character areas with the eastern side (within settlement) being comprised of detached dwellings set within smaller plots and the western side, which includes the application site, being comprised of detached properties set within very large plots. The existing property is a modestly scaled two storey dwelling with the upper floor being partly within the roofspace. The proposed building will be 10 times larger than the existing building – this will dwarf neighbouring properties contrary to policy CP3.
- The new building will be a 3-storey monolithic structure within an area of existing single and two storey houses. It will be totally at odds with the character of the site and surrounding area.
- The proposal is totally out of character in terms of height, bulk, mass, scale and proportion.
- The proposal would fail to provide a meaningful and acceptable transition between the settlement edge and the defined countryside beyond.
- The large building with the car park represents overdevelopment. This drastic change and intensive urbanised form of development onto the site will clearly be more apparent and dominant.
- The proposal will result in loss of rural setting of the area which comprises of two storey houses and single storey bungalows. The proposed building height will be out of character with the surrounding area.
- The screening of the site from wider views does not justify the schemes harmful effect on the overall character of the area.
- The height of the proposed building will result in the building being clearly visible from the road. The removal of existing trees (T12 – 14) will create gap in the existing screening that will contribute to the visual domination.
- The proposal will result in loss of greenery – particularly, lawns will be replaced by hardstanding for parking and walkways etc.

- The proposal represents inappropriate development within a residential garden.
- The development will be visible from the road and change the street scene significantly to the detriment of the area.
- The proposal includes a large area of currently undeveloped residential garden which is defined as 'greenfield land' in the NPPF. The proposal will result in inappropriate development of residential gardens contrary to paragraph 71 of the NPPF and policy TB06 of the Wokingham MDD Local Plan.
- The care home would be the only commercial business on the road. It would not be in keeping with the residential character of the road.

Building design:

- The proposed building will be of suburban design that would be detrimental to the rural character of the area.
- The building has an industrial iconoclastic configuration of a warehouse-like appearance that will degrade the high-quality environment of the area.
- The proposed building is an uninspiring, bland and utilitarian monolithic structure that fails to respect the existing quality of built environment.
- The building appears to be a student hall of residence which is not suited for this area.

Building sustainability:

- Whilst the sustainability report states that the development will achieve 'Very Good' BREEAM rating, a detailed reading of the report shows it is questionable if such rating will be possible to achieve.

(Officer note: The development has been conditioned to achieve a BREEAM Very Good rating).

Neighbour impact:

- Movement of emergency vehicles will cause neighbour disturbances.
- High levels of noise and light pollution. The nature of the development will require high level of external security lighting causing harm to the neighbouring properties.
- The light pollution will be exacerbated by the rooms in every floor being lit at night. Particularly, the top floor lights will be readily visible. This will adversely harm the other residents' amenities, seriously degrading their enjoyment of the night sky to an unacceptable degree and causing major visual disruption.
- Increased air pollution due to increased volume of traffic using the site.
- The new building will be located adjacent to the boundary with Pine Drive and West Heath House causing loss of privacy.
- The windows from the third storey will have overlooking impact on West Heath House's private amenity areas.
- The bin store will be visible from the neighbouring property Pine Drive.
- Loss of light impact
- Noise disturbance during construction.
- The smell from the bins would cause environmental and social concerns.

Trees and landscape:

- The site is covered by an area TPO. The proposal would require removal of several trees which is symptomatic of the site's unsuitability for the intensive nature of the use proposed.
- The site is located in Wokingham Landscape Character Area M1: Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands. The character is defined by low density housing set within mature woodland/ forestry enclosure giving a sense of remoteness. This landscape quality extends in the settlement gap between Finchampstead and Crowthorne to the National Trust land at Finchampstead Ridges and Simons Pond. The landscape character is defined by natural features including mature woodland dominating built form and provides the backdrop for the numerous public footpaths locally. This landscape is not formally designated but is special to local residents. The proposal will have harmful impact on the special landscape character.
- Lower Wokingham Road is a green route. The proposal will result in loss and damage to trees along the green route contrary to policy CC03.

(Officer's note: WBC Trees and Landscape officers have assessed the scheme and raised no objections subject to appropriate conditions).

Biodiversity:

- The site is within a forested residential area.
- Significant loss of biodiversity and local wildlife
- The site backs onto ancient woodland and the proposal will have negative impacts on the areas of natural interest.
- The biodiversity report submitted with the application does not exclude the possibility of Great Crested Newts (GCN) being present. GCN is a protected species and the report does not demonstrate that the proposal will not have any harmful impact on the protected species.

(Officer's note: WBC Ecology officers have assessed the scheme and raised no objections subject to appropriate conditions).

Locational sustainability:

- The site is located in an unsustainable location. There is a lack of amenities for future staff and residents in the immediate vicinity.
- There is poor local transport links.
- The site is within walking distance of Crowthorne Railway Station. However, the bus route 125A and B does not meet the 'good service' definition set out within the Core Strategy.
- The existing footways are narrow, often strewn with tree debris, mud, puddles and numerous existing driveway track and cars passing at 40mph. Future residents will not be comfortable using these footways.
- The existing health practices are already oversubscribed. The proposal will introduce significant additional residents with high health demand, causing pressure on already struggling health services.

Highways:

- The proposal is situated on a main, busy and dangerous road. Most of the times cars exceed the speed limit of 40mph. Additional traffic entering and egressing the site will cause highway safety issues.
- The site is located at the peak of a gentle hill, which reduces the visibility of the access.
- The proposal will cause further congestions on the road.
- The figures quoted in the travel plan are incorrect. The data relating to road safety is based on the current use and not the future use – this is unacceptable.
- Currently, only 2 people live in this property. The proposal will result in 80 people in any one point of time – a 400% increase. The associated increase in traffic volume will be significant causing road safety concerns.
- Increased traffic will cause pedestrian safety issues in front of the access.
- More pedestrians will use the footpath including mobility scooter and wheelchair users. The footpath is not equipped for that level of traffic.
- The road surface of Lower Wokingham Road is substandard and not fit for cycling.
- The development should include additional highway safety measures such as reducing the speed of the road to 30mph and including a safe pedestrian crossing.
- The proposal does not provide adequate off-road parking for the proposed development. There is no on-road parking available in the area. The proposal will result in people parking on the street and footpath causing pedestrian safety concerns.
- Traffic during construction will cause highway issues within the area.

(Officer's note: WBC Highways officers have assessed the scheme and raised no objections subject to appropriate conditions).

Flooding:

- During rainy weather the corner of the site where the care home is due to be situated suffers from severe flooding. The foul and surface water drainage strategy report also says that there is reasonable risk to flooding in the north-west corner of the property. These have not been considered fully in the proposal.

(Officer's note: WBC Flooding and Drainage officers have assessed the scheme and raised no objections subject to appropriate conditions).

Need:

- There are over 50 care homes within 10-mile radius with availability. As such, there is no need for the proposed scheme.

Community engagement:

- No community engagement was carried out. Whilst the planning statement refers to an event, it was not promoted amongst the local residents.

Other

- The proposal will set precedent for other similar developments in the area.
- The proposed care provider, Barchester, is known for mismanagement of care homes.

- The alternative site search has not been carried out properly and evidence provided by this document cannot be relied upon.
- The proposal is better-suited for a mixed-use setting.
- A proposal of this scale should be located within settlement limits on a previously development land.
- Future expansion of the proposed use would have additional negative impact on the site and surrounding environment.
- It is possible that visitors to the proposed development would enter neighbouring properties by mistake.
- The applicant lives in London – they do not have any interest in the local environment.
- What will happen to this building if the care provider goes out of business?

Officer comments:

Matters such as the quality of the care provider; background of the developer; and construction noise/ disturbance during development are not material consideration in planning. All other observations including principle of development, impact on the character of the area, highway safety, neighbour impact, impact on biodiversity etc. are given due consideration. The full assessment of the proposal including complete planning balance exercise is included in the planning issues section below.

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework National Design Guide National Planning Practice Guidance

Core Strategy (CS)

CP1 – Sustainable Development
 CP2 – Inclusive Communities
 CP3 – General Principles for Development
 CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements
 CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability
 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand
 CP7 – Biodiversity
 CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
 CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits (Inc Countryside)
 CP15 – Employment Development
 CP17 – Housing Delivery

MDD Local Plan (MDD)

CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 CC02 – Development Limits
 CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
 CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction
 CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks
 CC06 – Noise
 CC07 – Parking

CC09 – Development and Flood Risk
CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
TB05 – Housing Mix
TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens
TB07 – Internal Space Standards
TB09 – Residential Accommodation for Vulnerable Groups
TB12 – Employment Skills Plan
TB21 – Landscape Character
TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
TB25 – Archaeology

Other

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
CIL Guidance
Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document
Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (Limited weight)

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

1. The proposal relates to the demolition of the existing dwellinghouse and associated outbuildings and erection of a block of 60-bed specialist Care Home with associated access, services, parking and landscaping. The proposal is to use the existing access by widening it to support two-way traffic movement at the entrance.
2. The care home block will be an irregular shaped building to be sited near the north-west corner of the site. The building will have a maximum width of 49m and maximum depth of 46m broken down primarily into 3 sections. It would have 3 floors topped by crown roofs of varying ridge heights – the maximum being 12.4m. The footprint of the proposed building will be approximately 1,325 sq.m with a volume of 12,415 cu.m.
3. The proposed parking area will be in front of the building, set-back from the edge of the carriageway by 42.5m and will include 25 regular spaces, 1 ambulance parking space and 3 disabled bays. The outdoor amenity area is proposed to the south and east of the building and will include lawns and woodland walks.

The Site and the Surrounding:

4. The proposal site is a rectangular plot of land of approximately 0.91 hectare in area, located on the western side of Lower Wokingham Road. It is currently occupied by a two-storey detached house and several domestic outbuildings. The topography of the site is gently sloping, with the natural fall of the land from front to rear (east to west) with a level difference of 3.25m. Mature trees occupy all boundaries as well as the existing domestic garden, giving the site a parkland setting. Lower Wokingham Road is a designated Green Route under policy CC03, and the existing mature vegetation contribute to its verdant character.
5. The site is located within designated countryside with residential development of Bramley Grove occupying the eastern side across Lower Wokingham Road. Residential properties named West Wood, West Heath House and Pine Drive occupy the southern, western, and northern sides respectively and have a visual character similar to the proposal site. A private access road to West Heath House adjoins the site along northern boundary. The eastern side of Lower Wokingham Road is characterised by a linear form of development with a mix of dwelling types and designs, but the scale is predominantly two-storey with a relatively strong building line. Mature trees and front boundary vegetation are characteristics of the street and contribute to the Green Route designation.

Principle of Development:

- Development Plan:
6. The starting point for decision making is the development plan. Section 70[2] of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 & 38[6] of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the Development Plan consists of

Core Strategy 2010; MDD Local Plan 2014; and Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (Joint Plan) (2023) which are read alongside the NPPF. The MDD Local Plan policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Location of the Proposal

7. Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy and CC02 of the MDD Local Plan states that proposals will be permitted within development limits where the scale of the application reflects the facilities and services within the settlement. The development plan steers most developments to sustainable Major settlements with the best services, facilities and infrastructure. The definition of development limits recognises the consistent approach in planning to identify appropriate and sustainable areas for development.
8. The site is located outside of any defined settlement limits within designated countryside and Core Strategy policy CP11 is applicable in this instance. Policy CP11 is a restrictive policy designed to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment. Policy CP11 states that proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except:
 - 1) *It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and*
 - 2) *It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and*
 - 3) *It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or*
 - 4) *In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;*
 - 5) *In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:*
 - i) *Bring about environmental improvements; or*
 - ii) *Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.*
 - 6) *Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building;*
 - 7) *Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.*
9. The proposal is for a specialist Care Home (Use Class C2) that does not fall into any of the exceptional categories identified by the policy CP11. Whilst a Care Home can be considered as an enterprise since it is run commercially, the business cannot be considered a rural enterprise since there is no functional link between the proposed land use and countryside where countryside land is essential for the purpose.
10. The site currently contains a modest sized family dwelling and associated outbuildings and hardstanding that cumulatively cover an area of approximately 1,100 sq.m. The proposed building will have a footprint of 1,325 sq.m, with an additional 1,800 sq.m of hardstanding in the form of access road, parking and

pedestrian walkways. Consequently, the proposal will result in 184% of additional plot coverage that would have been considered excessive encroachment contrary to part 2 of CP11 even if the proposed use was a sustainable rural enterprise and is unacceptable in this regard.

11. Parts 3), 4) and 5) of CP11 are not applicable in this instance. Similarly, a specialist Care Home is not an essential community facility that cannot be accommodated within settlement limits. Finally, there is no policy requirement to provide affordable units for C2 proposals and as such, parts 6) and 7) of CP11 will not be applicable. Overall, the proposal is considered contrary to Policy CP11 and is unacceptable in principle.

Emerging Local Plan Update

12. The Local Plan Update (LPU), the plan which will supersede the adopted Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery (MDD) local plans, is at a relatively early stage of preparation. Public consultation of the Draft Local Plan under Regulation 18 was undertaken twice: the Draft Plan (2020) and the Revised Growth Strategy (2021). The current application site was not promoted by the landowner as part of the LPU call for sites. Notwithstanding, the LPU is at an early stage of preparation and attracts limited weight in determination of the current application.

Need Analysis

13. The proposal is for the construction of a specialist Care Home (older persons' accommodation) and the Core Strategy Policy CP2 (Inclusive Communities) of the Core Strategy (2010) seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities, including facilities for aged persons. Specifically, CP2a supports proposals that address the requirements of an ageing population, particularly in terms of housing, health and well-being. The policy ensures that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities to meet long-term needs. Policy TB09(d) (Residential accommodation for vulnerable groups) of the adopted MDD local plan (2014) supports, in principle, proposals that provide accommodation for specialist needs, including '*purpose-built accommodation*' for the elderly.
14. The development proposal would be consistent with the classification of 'residential care homes and nursing homes' as defined by the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) due to the level and type of care provided for meeting all activities of daily living.
15. Paragraph 2.40 of the Core Strategy (2010) refers to the Council's latest Older People's Housing Strategy which sets out the requirements for specialist housing for older people. The proposal would provide specialist accommodation that would help provide for the varied needs of the local community, in accordance with Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy.
16. Further, as part of the evidence to support the Draft Local Plan (2020), the council commissioned Opinion Research Services to produce a Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (January 2020). The LHNA considers specific types of accommodation for different groups, including older people/vulnerable people in the borough. The LHNA identified a future need for C2 provision equivalent to 527

dwellings, which represents almost 950 bedspaces, to be provided within the plan period (2018-2036). It should be noted, however, that there are various method/approaches of undertaking such analysis which can lead to various outcomes due to the use of standardised rates of access to specific types of accommodation which may not be reflective of access within Wokingham Borough. Wokingham Borough Council's own estimates for the need for Class C2 bedspaces is 215 over the period 2018-2036.

17. A needs assessment has been undertaken by Carterwood and provided as part of the application, which reviews existing provision within the borough. The assessment is based on a number of assumptions including:
 - the consideration of two areas – a market catchment area entailing the Wokingham Borough area of a circa 5-mile radius around the proposed site (the remaining area falls within Bracknell Forest) and the entire Wokingham Borough local authority area
 - that the earliest date the proposed care home would be available is 2025
 - use of minimum market standard bedrooms as providing an ensuite bathroom with WC and washbasin.
18. The assessment has identified an undersupply of care home bedrooms, including dedicated dementia care, and a high demand for additional beds, both in the proposed site market catchment area and Wokingham Borough as a whole. The assessment therefore considers there to be an existing and increasing unmet need for additional market standard elderly care home beds in this location.
19. In two recent appeal decisions for proposed care homes within the Borough (APP/X0360/W/22/3298882 decision date 7 February 2023 and APP/X0360/W/22/3308965 decision date 14 March 2023), inspectors have identified an unmet need for high quality care home accommodation and choice within the Borough that is not yet being reconciled through planning policy or decisions. In this regard, the proposal will deliver 60 specialist care bedspaces in line with Core Strategy policies CP2 and CP5 which is considered to weigh in favour of the scheme in the overall planning balance.
 - Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP)
20. In addition to Wokingham Borough Development Plan, Finchampstead Parish is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Whilst the FNDP was consulted with local residents for 6 weeks (Regulation 16) and was reviewed by an independent examiner in December 2022, it is yet to be passed through a Referendum and has not been adopted.
21. Section 5 of the FNDP relates to Appropriate Housing Development and policy ADH4 states that *“Development proposals for independent living housing accommodation for older residents for Care Homes and Vulnerable communities will be supported provided that they comply with Wokingham Borough Council Policy MDD TB09 and emerging policy H9 (Wokingham Borough Council Local Plan Update January 2020)”*. The proposal will comply with this policy. However, since the Neighbourhood Development Plan is yet to be adopted, it attracts limited weight.

- National Planning Policy Framework

22. The proposal is for the erection of a 60-bed specialist care home (Use Class C2). Paragraphs 60 and 62 of the NPPF (2021) recognise that planning decisions should consider the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community (including older people).
23. Paragraph 79 of the NPPF aims to promote sustainable development in rural areas, with housing 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.
24. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF seeks to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as a rural worker's dwelling, optimal viable use of a heritage asset, reuse of redundant or disused buildings, and subdivision of an existing building or if the building is of exceptional design. The site is located adjacent to existing dwellings on all sides. As such, the proposal will not result in an isolated new building and will comply with paragraph 80 of the national planning policy.

- Lack of 5 Years Housing Land Supply and Tilted Balance:

25. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where there is no 5YHLS or where the most important policies for determining the application are out-of-date, the 'tilted balance' should be engaged. Paragraph 11 d states that permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.
26. The Council's most recent published full assessment of the housing land supply position is the 'WBC Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement at 31st March 2022' which concluded a demonstrable deliverable housing land supply of 3.95 years, excluding any consideration of past over delivery. As such, the tilted balance, as advocated by the NPPF, will be engaged. However, it is a matter of fact that housing completions within Wokingham Borough have significantly exceeded all assessments of housing need. The strong performance on housing delivery is a material factor that should be considered alongside the technical shortfall in deliverable housing land supply.
27. In this instance, the proposal would replace 1 no. dwelling with a block of 60-bedroom care home. The PPG in the 'Housing for Older people and disabled people' has clarified that account can be taken of communal and older persons accommodation within the housing land supply and the ratio is the net increase in number of bedrooms divided by the average number of adults in households in England (which is 1.8 people as per the latest census data). In this instance, the proposal is for 60-bed care home that would be counted as 33.3 dwellings equivalent (net increase of 32 units) within an existing residential plot. Whilst this will be contrary to Policy CP11 of the current development plan, in the context of paragraph 11d of the NPPF, this conflict will attract moderate weight in the planning balance and the proposal will have to be considered accordingly. On the other

hand, the provision of additional 32 equivalent market dwellings will contribute to the Council's 5-yhls position and will attract weight, albeit this weight will be tempered as there is no mechanism to ensure that these houses will all be from Wokingham since the Care Home's catchment includes areas within neighbouring councils. These conclusions will inform the planning balance exercise carried out at the end of this report.

Character of the Area:

28. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high-quality design. R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.
29. The site is located on the western side of Lower Wokingham Road in designated countryside but adjoins the settlement boundary of Crowthorne, a modest development location to the east. This section of Lower Wokingham Road is characterised by two distinctively different patterns of development on two sides. The western side of Lower Wokingham Road including the application site has a distinct verdant character with an established grain of 5 detached dwellings set within large plots. The other side is more suburban with predominantly two-storey detached dwellings arranged in a linear pattern of frontage development. The application site is surrounded by mature trees on all sides that are protected by Tree Preservation Order and contribute to the overall sylvan character of the area. The site falls completely within designated countryside and the existing modest development on this site commensurate with its designation.
30. The proposal is for the replacement of the existing dwelling and associated outbuildings with a block of 60 bed care home that will have three storeys and will be sited closer to the northwestern corner of the plot. The building will cover more than 14.5% of the site area that will depart from the general character of the surrounding area which is modest sized detached dwellings on spacious plots with an average plot coverage of less than 5%. However, the development will be contained in one building which will be located within a large plot similar to the general pattern of development in this section of Lower Wokingham Road. Moreover, the proposal will not alter the existing plot size and will maintain acceptable separation from neighbouring properties. Consequently, whilst recognised as deviating from established character of the immediate area, the additional built mass will not detrimentally impact the grain of development of the area.
31. The proposal also includes extensive hardstanding to the front resulting in 34.3% of the site being occupied by physical development that will result in excessive encroachment and expansion of development away from the original building contrary to policy CP11 and will undoubtedly cause a degree of harm to the character and appearance of the area. Notwithstanding, the existing trees and hedgerows along the boundaries of the site provide a significant degree of containment and as a result, this harm will be localised. The proposed development would retain and strengthen most of the peripheral landscaping. Although there would be some degree of tree and hedgerow loss to accommodate the

development, the character of the verdant boundary treatment will largely remain intact.

32. Additionally, notwithstanding the wooded, verdant and undeveloped nature of the site and sporadic nature of the development on the western side of Lower Wokingham Road, this is not the sole characteristic of that immediate vicinity. There are also more formal housing estates of Bramley Grove and The Brambles opposite as well as to the north (Ashdale Park) and properties between Houston Way and Roman Ride. The site is therefore set within the context of existing built form in close proximity. The proposed development would therefore not encroach into that more widely open countryside environment. In any case, it would still retain a significant verdant character with the retention of most of the existing mature trees on the site.

Development of a private residential garden

33. Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan seeks to avoid inappropriate development of residential gardens where there is harm to the local area. Permission would only be granted where there is a positive contribution to the built form and surrounding spaces, integration with the layout of the surrounding area, appropriate hard and soft landscaping, amenity space, building separation and compatibility with the general building height.
34. The proposal will constitute development of a residential garden although this does not imply that the site is defined as greenfield land. The grain of development of this section of Lower Wokingham Road comprises of detached houses on large plots. The proposed building, whilst significantly larger than the existing dwelling, would maintain the underlying grain due to the considerable size of the plot. The proposal will also maintain significant separation distances from neighbouring properties and whilst the building height will be 150% more than the average building height of the surrounding area, it will not be detrimental to the built form of the surrounding areas due to building separation and presence of intervening mature vegetation. Overall, the proposal is considered to be not in conflict with policy TB06.

Density at the settlement edge:

35. Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan states that development at the edge of settlements is acceptable where it is demonstrated that it 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.
36. The site is located within a designated countryside location but adjoins settlement boundary to the east, see figure 1 below. In this instance, the proposal is for 60-bed care home that would be counted as 33.3 dwellings equivalent within a site of approximately 0.91ha area. The existing density of the residential neighbourhood of Bramley Grove is 14.6 dph. In comparison, the proposal would result in a residential density of 36 dph which would be significantly greater than the existing density and will be contrary to policy CC02.

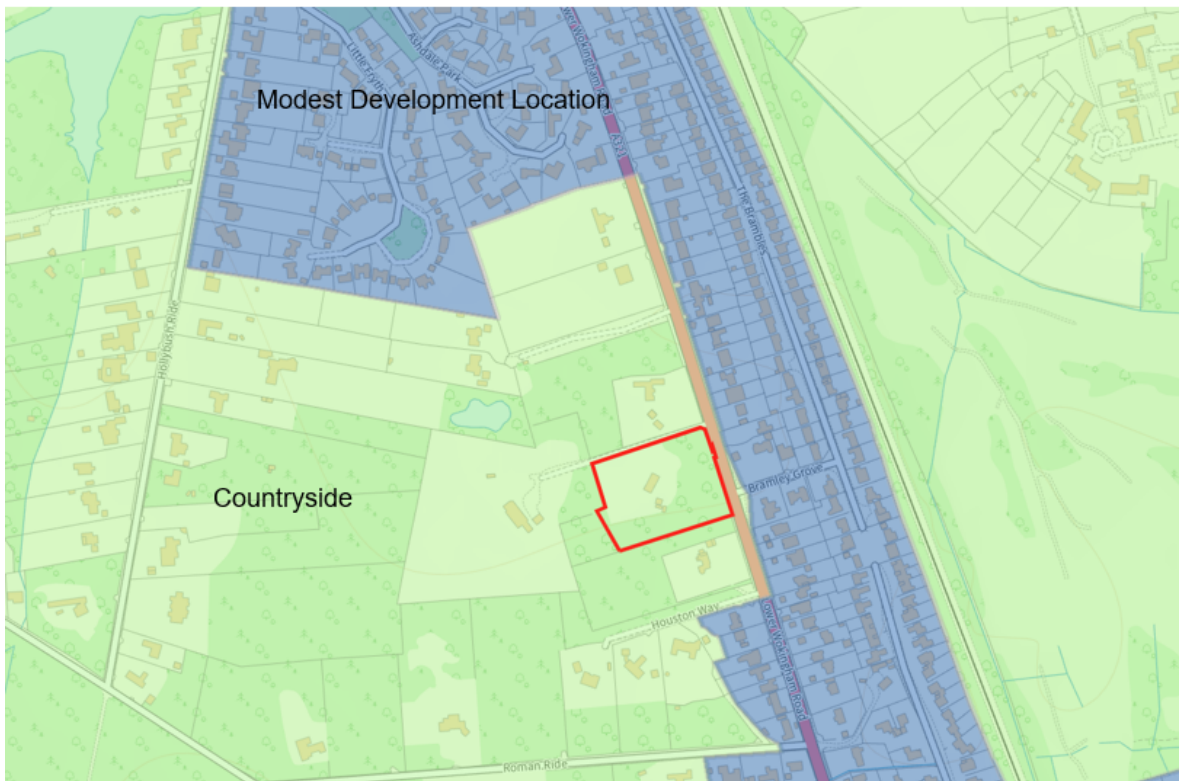


Figure 1: WBC Policy map to show the location of the site with respect to Settlement Boundary and Countryside

37. The location of the site is also important in providing a transition or edge of settlement character in line with Policy CC02 of MDD Local Plan. Currently, the site acts as a transition between Bramley Grove to the east and countryside to the west. However, as can be seen from Figure 1 above, the western side of the site includes existing residential developments on Hollybush Ride and Heath Ride and as such, does not represent open countryside. Consequently, the importance of the site as a transitional edge is reduced.
38. In addition to increase in residential density, the proposal would result in a significant increase in number of users from a maximum of 5 (the existing single-family home) to a minimum of 74 (60 residents and 14 full-time equivalent staff) resulting in urbanisation. The proposal will represent the extension of development into a verdant residential plot in countryside with a consequential erosion of its sylvan character and appearance. However, due to the nature of the proposed use and adequate plot size, the intensification of use would not be readily apparent from surrounding areas and the harm would be localised and limited.

General Building Form and Design:

39. The existing dwellings within the immediate neighbourhood comprise of modest two-storey houses and chalet bungalows of an average ridge height of 8.5m with simple pitched roofs on top. In contrast, the proposal would be a block of 60 bedrooms arranged within three floors with maximum ridge height of 12.4m. The proposed building will be larger and more bulky when directly compared to the existing buildings. The scale and massing of the structure will be at odds with the modest size properties in the locality. Similarly, the proposed ridge height will be significantly higher than the neighbouring properties.

40. It is acknowledged that the proposal will result in a significant increase in bulk, mass, width and height compared to the existing dwelling and associated outbuildings as well as other properties in the neighbourhood. However, as noted before, the topography of the site is gently sloping with a level difference of 3.25m from front to the rear. Consequently, the additional building height will not be readily apparent from the Lower Wokingham Road street scene. The proposed building is designed sensibly with ridge height gradually increasing from front to back to reflect the fall of the land and to minimise the impact of the additional height on the street scene. Furthermore, the building will be set 56m behind the edge of the carriageway. This, along with retention of mature vegetation will provide adequate setting for a large building to be accommodated and as such the proposal will not result in detrimental impact on the character of the area.
41. In terms of building design, it is proposed to utilise brick facing and tile hanging for the vertical surfaces and red tiled roof. Appropriate design references, consistent with established local vernacular within the wider area will be introduced. Importantly, the overall built mass will be broken up by the use of features such as gables, and a varied roof line and projections and recesses will provide visual interest and variation to the elevations. In addition, the height of the building near the boundary with neighbouring property Pine Drive will be reduced to minimise the contrast. These features of the scheme will create a building of visual interest that would help to overcome the increased size of the structure. Whilst a crown roof is proposed, in this instance due to the building's considerable set-back from the street frontage, the roof would not be readily conspicuous from public vantage points and will not appear as a dominant feature. The design is therefore acceptable in context.

Landscape Character

42. The site is located in Wokingham Landscape Character Area M1: Finchampstead Forested and Settled Sands, a high-quality landscape where the combination of built and natural elements combine to create a landscape of strong character, which is well managed and in good overall condition. Although much of the landscape has a suburban character it does have a very strong sense of place and distinctive pattern of elements; continuous interconnected forestry and woodland, acidic wildlife habitats including large lakes and bogs, recreational areas and the settlement pattern of post-war properties along long straight rides. The landscape quality is assessed as 'High', the landscape sensitivity as 'Moderate' and is identified as having the lowest capacity for change. The Landscape Strategy is to conserve and strengthen existing character. The key aspects to be conserved and actively managed are the forestry and woodland, important wildlife habitats, and recreational areas.
43. The eastern site boundary with Lower Wokingham Road measures 84m in length and the main access is located 21.4m to the south of the NE corner. It has a dense mature tree screening which extends into the site by about 44m and is most dense in the NE quadrant. The tree density to the southern boundary is slightly less dense and extends for 18m into the plot, but there is an area of dense woodland in the SE corner of the site.
44. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted with the application. The LVIA assesses the landscape value of the site as 'medium'.

However, the Council's Trees and Landscape officer considers the landscape value of the site is MEDIUM/HIGH as the site reflects the valuable landscape attributes of the M1 character area. The value of the wider landscape setting is HIGH as it contains many areas of forest and protected woodland and trees, is located on and contributes to the character of the Green Route and close to Local Wildlife sites. The proposal will result in moderate to moderate/ high changes in landscape and this will have a degree of negative impact on the landscape character of the area. Notwithstanding, the T&L officer broadly agrees with the findings of the LVIA and has not raised any objections to the proposed development.

Visual Impact

45. In visual terms, the site has a distinctly wooded appearance which on the boundary along Lower Wokingham Road is dominated by the mature frontage trees. Some of the other trees within the site's boundary are also seen from various public viewpoints to varying degrees. The proposed care home would therefore be visible to varying degrees from local public vantage points. However, it would be set back and softened by the intervening vegetation which would likely remain the dominant feature of the site, despite the loss of trees to accommodate the development.
46. The degree of prominence of the proposed building as seen from outside of the site would also be reduced to some extent through its design and positioning within the site and some likely additional softening by proposed new trees, hedge and shrub planting. In this respect, the varying degrees of set back from the site boundaries, the massing of the proposed building being broken up by projections and recesses as well as the building slab level to be located lower than the carriageway due to site's topography would contribute positively to reduce the visual impact of the proposal.
47. Due to the sporadic nature of existing development on the western side of Lower Wokingham Road, there is a distinctly verdant character to this section of the streetscene. That would therefore be eroded to a degree but for the above reasons, not significantly. Furthermore, the proposed development would be seen in the context of existing dwellings on eastern side of the road. As such, the presence of the proposed additional built form within that existing context would not be seen as an isolated alien visual feature.
48. The proposed development of the currently partially undeveloped wooded site would inevitably change the character and appearance of the site and to some extent the immediate surroundings. As such, to a degree, it would detract from the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. However, for the above reasons, the extent of that harm, including localised visual effects, would be limited.
49. Several objections have been received from local residents on the proposal's negative impact on character and appearance grounds. It is considered that whilst the proposed development would be contrary to policies CP3 and CP11 as well as recommendations contained in the Borough Design Guide SPD and would cause harm to the landscape character and appearance of the site and surrounding area, the extent of that harm would be limited, and this will be considered further in the planning balance section.

Sustainable Design and Climate Change:

50. Wokingham Borough Council has declared a Climate Emergency and prepared a Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP, third progress report, 2022) which guides the Council's actions in response to climate emergency. In December 2022, WBC has also published a Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement (CCIPPS) which defines the Council's position relating to climate change as applicable to the planning process.
51. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan covers sustainable design and construction, requiring that "All new non-residential proposals of more than 100 sq m gross non-residential floorspace shall at least: a) Achieve the necessary mandatory Building Research Establishment Assessment Method (BREEAM) requirements or any future national equivalent." The application of Policy CC04 is clarified by the following wording in the CCIPPS "Non-residential schemes will be expected to meet the interim Future Buildings Standard (as required by Building Regulations) of a minimum 27% reduction in emissions, as a minimum. In practice, this means meeting BREEAM 'Excellent' standard or higher. Delivery beyond these standards is a material planning consideration which will be taken into account." The requirement for BREEAM 'Excellent' is explained by the fact that a 27% reduction in carbon emissions is not achieved by 'Very Good' certification.¹
52. Policy CC05 of the MDD encourages renewable energy and decentralised energy networks. It requires a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions for developments of 10+ dwellings or in excess of 1000 m² floor space. This policy is clarified as follows in the CCIPPS "the policy requirement for 10% energy reduction through renewable / low carbon technologies is expected to be achieved in addition to the uplifted emissions improvements required through Building Regulations (as updated in June 2022)."
53. Policies CC04 and CC05 are further supported by R21 of the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD which requires that new development contribute to environmental sustainability and the mitigation of climate change.
54. Paragraph 152 of the NPPF states that plans should "*shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure*" and paragraphs 157 – 158 deal with individual development and emphasise the importance of energy efficient, low carbon development.
55. In terms of energy efficiency and sustainable building rating, the application is supported by an energy statement and a BREEAM pre-assessment report which indicates that BREEAM 'Very Good' certification is targeted with an overall projected score of 63%. This is approximately in the middle of the 'Very Good' range, however only 27.27% of available Energy credits have been targeted – the lowest of any of the environmental sections except for innovation (which is an additional section capturing where exceptional standards across all sections are

¹ ARUP on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council, *Local Plan Update: Climate Change Evidence Base*, p.6, 76, 84. Available at: [Environment evidence - Wokingham Borough Council](#)

achieved). This leaves the proposal close to the legal limits for energy performance set in the Building Regulations.

56. The Energy Statement assumes values for most of the building fabric to achieve target U-values, however, this specification has not been confirmed. SBEM outputs show that the Building Emission Rate is very close to the Target Emission Rate (21.6 is 90% of 24) while the Building Primary Energy Rate is 83% of the Target Primary Energy Rate. These results could be improved by implementation of passive design measures and an uplift in the fabric performance specified. The report also suggests Photovoltaic Array to offset carbon emissions and a roof plan showing the location has been submitted. The energy statement submitted with the application states that the PV Array will be able to produce the 92 kWp, resulting in 19.07% of on-site energy demand being provided by a zero-carbon source. This is secured by condition 36 and no objection is raised.
57. Overall, it is considered that the proposal has not fully demonstrated it can achieve a satisfactory sustainable building by design. However, this can be overcome by an improved approach to energy secured through appropriate conditions. Some of the sustainable building construction details are also controlled by Building Regulation climate emergency response such as Part L – Conservation of fuel and power, Part F – Ventilation, Part O – Overheating and Part S – Infrastructure for charging electric vehicles. Considering all of the above, no objection is raised on Sustainable Design and Climate Change grounds in this instance. Notwithstanding, a condition is included for the development to achieve BREEAM Very Good rating following discussion with the applicants (condition 33).

Building Accessibility:

58. The proposed building will be sited on a gently sloping site. Whilst no detailed section through the entrance of the building is provided, it is considered that due to the site's profile, it is possible to create a ramped access into the building from the parking and front court. Three disabled parking spaces are proposed in front of the building for direct access. Internally lifts are shown that can accommodate a wheelchair user. Whilst not explicitly mentioned, some of the bedrooms and ensuite facilities can be reconfigured for wheelchair adaptability. For these reasons, the proposed building is considered to be an accessible and adaptable development and no objection is raised on this ground.

Locational Sustainability:

59. Policy CP11 refers to preventing development outside of settlement limits as they are generally not well located for facilities & service and to prevent reliance on private motor cars. Paragraph 79 of the NPPF 2021 states that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and section 9 seeks to ensure the growth of sustainable transport in managing development and approval of planning applications. More specifically, paragraph 110 of the NPPF seeks to promote sustainable travel in decisions with consideration of:
 - a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
 - b) safe and suitable access to the site that are achieved for all users;

- c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code 46; and
 - d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
60. This is reinforced in Paragraph 124, which refers to the “*availability and capacity of infrastructure and services...and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use*” (124c).
61. In this instance, it is acknowledged that with the nature of the care provided and age and capacity of residents, there is unlikely to be many residents leaving the site on foot. As such, there is a reduced need for convenient walking distance access to local retail facilities and the issue of sustainability relates largely to access to public transport for staff and visitors.
62. On this point, the site is considered moderately sustainable since it is located on the edge of settlement boundary with existing residential units on the opposite side of the road. Crowthorne Railway Station is just over 1km walking distance from the site (12 min walk) and there is a footpath with streetlights directly linking the site to the station. Within Crowthorne facilities include some small-scale shops, a business park and the train station. Similarly, bus stops are located on Nine Mile Ride within 1km walking distance with appropriate walking conditions. Whilst bus services do not meet the definition of a good public transport service, as outlined in paragraph 4.37 of the Core Strategy, the train service at Crowthorne provides stopping services between Reading and Redhill and could reasonably be a method of travel to work for staff. It is also possible to use cycle as an alternative mode of transport as Lower Wokingham Road is well lit, although there is no dedicated cycle lane available.
63. Whilst it is acknowledged that the 24-hour care would involve shift changeovers that may occur when bus services are not running and it is likely that there would be private car journeys as a result of the location of the site, the presence of the footpath, as well as the level of services and facilities within Crowthorne and the location of the train station, provides desirable opportunities for alternative methods of transport to that of private vehicle. In addition, a framework travel plan for staff has been submitted that includes measures to encourage use of non-car modes of transport and car sharing. This document has been secured through planning condition 16. For these reasons, no objection is raised on the locational sustainability grounds. Overall, whilst the site is not highly sustainable, there are opportunities to use alternative modes of transport.
64. Concerns have been raised by local residents on unsustainable location and lack of appropriate walking conditions for the future users of the development grounds. As discussed above, officers consider the site to be suitably located for the proposed development. In terms of walking conditions, the developer has agreed to provide a planning obligation to be secured by legal agreements to deliver pedestrian route improvement on A321. This is afforded weight in terms of benefits of the proposed scheme in the planning balance.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

General:

65. As this is a care home, only staff would be regularly accessing and egressing the site. It is proposed that there would be a total of 40 members of staff working per day split over 3 shifts. The nationally accepted TRICS database was assessed and for a site of this size and additional 6 trips would be generated during the AM and PM peak hours. This would have limited impact on the existing traffic levels on Lower Wokingham Road. Over a 12-hour period, this would amount to around 110 additional trips.
66. It is unlikely that traffic from this proposed development would have an adverse impact on the highway network. A Transport Statement is submitted with the application which states that there will be 14 full time equivalent staffs working on the site at any point of time. Parking provision is calculated accordingly.

Parking

67. It is proposed to provide 29 spaces on site including 3 disabled spaces and 1 ambulance parking. This is below the WBC parking standard. A parking utilisation exercise has been carried out based on other sites within Wokingham which shows that even at the busiest time (12-2) there is ample capacity within the car park for this proposed care home. Consequently, no objection is raised on the proposed level of parking. However, a Parking Management Strategy has been secured as a condition for the parking to be appropriately managed (condition 28).
68. All spaces are of acceptable size and swept path analysis is provided to demonstrate that all spaces can be accessed.

Cycle Parking

69. It is proposed that cycle parking will be provided to standard which is acceptable. Cycle store is shown in front of the building within a secured area, and this is acceptable.

Access

70. It is proposed to widen the existing access for Oak Dale to accommodate two-way movement. This is acceptable. The location of the access to the site is on a long straight section of Lower Wokingham Road, and the visibility sight lines are greater than those set out in national guidance of 120m for a 40mph road. As such, there is no highway safety concerns relating to the proposed access.
71. Several objections were received from the local residents relating to highway safety issues arising from the proposal. Whilst these objections are acknowledged, the applicant has provided adequate information to demonstrate that the proposed scheme is acceptable in terms of the proposed access, level of parking and highway safety grounds.

72. An assessment of casualty accidents over the last 5 years has shown that there were no accidents on the stretch of Lower Wokingham Road apart from at the junctions with Nine Mile Ride and Dukes Ride. It is unlikely that the small increase in traffic would increase the number of casualties. It must be remembered that non-casualty accidents are not recorded. As there are no apparent highway safety issues with this stretch of Lower Wokingham Road there would be limited support from the police to reduce the speed limit to 30mph. The provision of pedestrian crossing facilities would be included in the walking strategy (condition 17) which will be secured by legal agreement (condition 19).
73. The WBC Highways officers have reviewed the submitted information and raised no objections subject to conditions securing additional details.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking

74. The proposal will replace an existing family home by a block of 60-bedroom care home that will be located closer to the northern and western boundaries compared to the existing building. The proposed front building line will be similar to the current dwelling, but the rear building line will project significantly behind the neighbouring property Pine Drive to the north. The north elevation includes service areas to the front that do not have any windows. Three sets of bedroom windows at 3 different levels are set back from the boundary by 23m and from the rear amenity areas of the neighbouring property by more than 50m. This is significantly more than the Borough Design Guide SPD recommended 30m separation for 3-storey habitable rooms back-to-back distance. Additionally, the northern boundary is sufficiently screened by TPO protected mature trees. Taking all these into consideration, the proposal is considered to not have any harmful overlooking impact on neighbouring property Pine Drive.
75. Neighbouring property West Heath House is located to the west and has more than 73m separation from the rear boundary of the application site. The intervening distance is occupied by mature woodland in the ownership of West Heath House. Similarly, neighbour property Westwood is separated from the proposed development by more than 50m deep woodlands. Due to the considerable separation and existing screening provided by the woodland, no overlooking impact is expected on these neighbouring properties.
76. Objections have been received from local residents on potential overlooking impacts. As described, the proposed development will maintain acceptable separation from neighbouring properties, as recommended by the Borough Design Guide SPD and will retain significant vegetation cover to provide additional screening. Consequently, no objection is raised.

Loss of Light and Overbearing

77. Whilst the proposed building will be significantly larger than the existing buildings, due to their relative siting including significant separation on all sides, the proposal is considered to not have loss of light impact on neighbouring properties to the degree that the proposal should be refused.

78. The proposal will be sufficiently screened from the neighbouring properties on all sides by existing mature vegetation to the extent only glimpsed views of the building will be apparent from the surrounding residential gardens. This, along with considerable separation means the building would not appear overbearing to the neighbouring residential amenity. Even if all landscaping were to fail, the gardens of adjoining neighbouring properties are large and multi-aspect. This fact, coupled with the orientation of the respective neighbouring properties, would mean views to the proposed care home would be partial in an overall vista. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not cause a significant loss of outlook.

Noise

79. Paragraph 185 of the NPPF aims to minimise potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development. Similarly, Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity, Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact. Page 46 of the Borough Design Guide SPD states that, "*perceived privacy is determined more by the degree to which one hears one's neighbours than by overlooking*".
80. The application site is located on Lower Wokingham Road which is a main road with high volume of traffic. Whilst the mature trees in the residential gardens provide visual relief from an urban environment, there is constant hum of vehicle noise from the Lower Wokingham Road. This in itself does not provide a significant disturbance but is noticeable and detracts from any perception of tranquillity.
81. Objections have been received on potential noise disturbance from the proposed development. The proposed care home would be a noise sensitive receptor in its own right as opposed to being a generating source since the future residents will be frail and elderly. Outdoor activity in the grounds of the care home, characterised by conversation in the majority, would not give rise to such significant levels of noise as to disturb the quiet enjoyment of neighbouring occupiers.
82. Deliveries, service vehicles and staff movements, with the latter being dictated by shift patterns of carers, would predominantly take place in front of the building during the daytime rather than at unsociable hours. Hours of delivery is secured by condition 29, Delivery Servicing Plan. It is considered that arrival of medical vehicles at odd hours would be the only unfortunate and unavoidable exception. However, such activities would take place at the frontage of the building where the background noise is high due to vehicular movements on Lower Wokingham Road and would not be disruptive to neighbouring residential amenities.
83. In terms of mechanical noise, whilst no plant room is shown externally on the plans, there is a plant room in ground floor near the northern boundary. However, from the submitted information it is not clear if all noise will be contained within or if there will be some ventilation. No plant noise report has been submitted with the current application to show that adverse noise impacts will not affect neighbouring residents or future occupants of the proposed care home. This is secured by condition 10, Noise Impact Assessment. In addition, there is a kitchen shown on the lower ground floor, but no external extract flue is shown. These also should form part of the noise assessment report. Whilst it is preferable to resolve these issues prior to determination, in this instance it is considered that a noise report can

be conditioned as a pre-commencement submission and no objection is raised on this ground.

Odour

84. Cooking on a large scale has a risk of odour nuisance if not appropriately treated and extracted to minimise odours and encourage dispersal. The design of the flue should be based on the odour risk profile of the food being cooked and the proximity to sensitive receptors. There is no flue shown on the plans – as such, this detail is required as a pre-commencement condition 23.

Lighting

85. The proposed development would include additional lighting as part of the site's security which can have potential neighbour impact. Since no external lighting details is provided, it is secured by condition 31 to demonstrate no harmful impact on neighbouring amenity and biodiversity of the area.

Amenity of Future Residents:

External amenity:

86. The proposal includes a communal amenity area of approximately 5,600 sq. m for the future residents. The level of amenity proposed is acceptable for the intended use. The amenity area will be to the south and will include a mix of lawns, paths and woodland. This will provide appropriate amenity for the proposed use and no objection is raised. However, the proposed landscape scheme requires additional details to be confirmed and this is secured by condition 21.

Internal amenity:

87. As per the Department of Health's National Minimum Standards, for all new build developments, each room should provide a minimum of 12sq metres usable floor-space (excluding ensuite facilities). Additionally, rooms are required to individually and naturally ventilated with windows conforming to recognised standards.
88. Submitted plans suggest that all rooms will have acceptable level of internal space and will be served by at least one external window. In this regard, no objection is raised.

Trees and Landscape:

Trees

89. The existing tree cover consists of mature native species; Lime, Scots Pine, Oak, Birch, Willow and non-native broadleaves such as and Sycamore and Sweet Chestnut, with Holly and Rhododendron understorey, along with ornamental Spruce and other typical garden conifers.
90. There are 80 single trees, 7 tree groups, and 1 woodland. The boundary leylandii are GO3 and GO4. There are 2 'A' quality Oaks T50 (A2) and T68 (A2), 42 'B' quality trees, 30 'C' quality and 6 'U'. The tree groups are classified as 5 'C' quality,

2 'U'. Of these, 7 trees will be felled due to poor condition, and 10 trees and 2 groups to facilitate development, of which 1 tree T38 is a 'B' quality Scots Pine located close to the western boundary and conflicts with the proposed footprint. All of the trees except T38 are low quality, and provided they are all replaced within the landscape scheme, there are no objections to their removal.

91. Many of the trees in the schedule, including the group of Sweet Chestnut G05 are identified for management including pruning of some kind which should be adopted and included in a Landscape Management Plan (Condition 8).
92. Objections have been received from local residents due to negative impact of the proposal on trees. The proposal includes removal of 20 trees, the replacement of which is secured by a pre-commencement landscape condition 21. The application is supported by Arboricultural Implications Assessment and Method Statement report which provides details of protection of existing trees. The WBC Trees and Landscape officer has reviewed the report and commented that the report has described most of the potential issues and where they relate to the site but will have to be updated to clarify certain technical details. This is secured by condition 22.

Landscape Proposal

93. The proposed building and hard landscape covers the NW quadrant of the site, which had the least trees that were mostly of poor quality. The remaining 3 quadrants are the most wooded and provide a setting for the landscape proposals which work with the existing tree cover, tree and understorey species.
94. The Landscape framework is illustrated in the Landscape General Arrangement Drawing. A hard landscape hierarchy is proposed which shows woodland paths go through the RPA so must be of No Dig construction and set back from any root buttresses. The wildflower areas cover a significant part of the site and will be a positive addition to any garden, but the soil type of the site must be established in order to arrange for the most appropriate wildflower mix which should include a nurse crop of annual wildflowers. These details are secured by landscape condition 21.
95. In summary, although located in the countryside, the landscape character of the site, which has very good tree cover, provides visual screening that is protected by TPO not just on the site itself, but on the site to the north. This screening can be relied upon since the trees are protected and if any of the trees require felling due to condition, they can be replaced with a tree replacement notice.
96. The nature of the building and its use mean that its footprint and associated carparking covers the NW quadrant of the site using over 34% of the overall site. However, the majority of the remaining site is retained as open space, a parkland environment containing mature trees and open grassy glades that provided adequate space as a setting for the larger building and its use, and a recreational space with attractive views from rooms within the building. Open glades are typical within the site and although some trees need to be removed to accommodate the building these are mostly low quality. The landscape and planting design ideas including replacement trees for those lost to the development are secured by condition. As such, there is no objection to the proposed development on trees and landscape grounds.

Environmental Health:

Contamination

97. Whilst the Council holds no specific information to indicate that the application site or the area surrounding the site may be contaminated, on a precautionary basis the possibility of contamination should be considered when a potentially sensitive development, such as a care home, is proposed. For this reason, the WBC Environmental Health officers have recommended a condition (11) should the application be recommended for approval.

Waste Storage

98. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan requires adequate internal and external storage for the segregation of waste and recycling as well as provision for green waste and composting and an appropriate area for ease of collection. The waste storage capacity must be adequate for the intended occupation level of the proposed properties. Whilst the proposed plan show an area for bin storage, since no details have been provided at this stage, this is secured by condition 34.

Flooding and Drainage:

99. The proposal site is located within Flood Zone 1 and as such redevelopment of the site for Care Home is acceptable in principle. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which has been reviewed by the WBC Drainage officers and raised no objection to the proposed development subject to conditions 20 and 35 securing additional details including flow path for exceedance for the 1 in 100-year storm when system is at capacity.
100. Objections have been received from local residents on potential risk of flooding of neighbouring properties arising from the construction of a large building. There is a shallow ditch that runs partially along the western boundary however, this does not connect to any features downstream and appears to be a localised depression. Moreover, Thames Water has confirmed that there is network infrastructure capacity for both Foul Water and Surface Water. Consequently, officers have not raised concerns relating to flooding and drainage.

Ecology:

101. The application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment report (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, ref LLD2364, November 2021).

Bats

102. The report includes results from a preliminary roost assessment and follow up activity surveys for bat species that might be using the existing buildings on site. Surveys have been carried out to appropriate standards and there is no objection raised on this ground.
103. The surveys have identified that the main dwelling is used by two species of bat, Brown Long-eared bat and Soprano Pipistrelle for roosting. The WBC Ecology

officer agrees that the number of emergences observed is in line with a day roost type for both these species. The development proposal will result in the destruction of these roosts and the applicant's ecologist has identified that a derogation licence will be required from Natural England. The local planning authority can be confident that a licence is likely to be granted. Consequently, as per the British Standard 42020:2013, condition 6 is included securing the submission of a copy of the licence prior to commencement of the development.

Great Crested Newts

104. The development is in an amber risk zone for Great Crested Newts, according to the risk map developed for the Wokingham Borough district licence for this species. The local planning authority will need to explicitly consider the potential impact of the development proposal on this species. The Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) includes an eDNA survey result from the only pond known to be within 500m of the site without barriers to dispersal. The result was negative. It is therefore agreed that it is unlikely that this species is present on site nor will be adversely affected by the proposed development. Notwithstanding, an informative (9) is included to remind the applicant that should any GCN or evidence of GNC is found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately, and an ecological consultant contacted for further advice before works can proceed.

Reptiles

105. A reptile survey has not been undertaken but the EclA has noted anecdotal records of Adder from the current owner. It goes on to hypothesise that reptiles may be present and using the site. The absence of reptiles on site has not been demonstrated. It is also considered that the habitats on site have potential to support reptiles, particularly Slow worm which is more shade tolerant.
106. Paragraph 5.3.2 proposes some general mitigation measures to take during construction to prevent harm to reptiles. These are not detailed enough to be able to directly condition their implementation. However, it is accepted that the risk to reptiles can be mitigated during construction and that the landscape proposals as currently shown would not have a significant adverse impact on the local population. Consequently, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (condition 8) is applied to seek sufficient mitigation detail for this species (and others) prior to construction.

Breeding Birds

107. Breeding birds are identified as using the garage on site for nesting. Mitigation measures proposed are based around timing of the demolition and construction works. This is appropriate and propose that the measure is covered and secured within the CEMP condition.

Priority Habitat

108. Natural England's provisional Priority Habitat layer (identifying Habitat of Principal Importance - HPI) highlights the site as 'No main habitat but additional habitats present' with notes that this may be deciduous woodland. The EclA demonstrates that the woodland habitat present is a mix of conifer and deciduous trees with an

understorey that is a mixture of native and non-native species such as would be found in a large garden setting. This is not HPI and WBC Ecology officer agrees with this assessment.

109. The woodland is still valuable to wildlife and is likely important for the bat, bird, reptile and invertebrate species mentioned above. The landscape design seeks to retain mature trees in a garden setting with wildflowers introduced amongst a formal path network. Officers are of the view that this could retain the existing interest and potentially enhance the site based on the outlined enhancements given in section 6 of the EclA.

Ecological Enhancements

110. Outline ecological enhancements are proposed in the EclA in section 6. Technically, these are a mix of enhancements and compensation measures (e.g. the bat and bird boxes). However, WBC Ecology officer considers that, as a whole, they could result in a net gain for biodiversity. However, since no details have been provided with the application, these are secured by condition 7.
111. Overall, subject to conditions securing various details, there is no objection to the proposal on ecology grounds.

Infrastructure:

CIL:

112. The proposal is for additional floor area of Use Class C2. A CIL rate of £60/m² is applicable for this type of development.

Affordable Housing:

113. Paragraph 5.4 of the Affordable Housing SPD states that 'for the avoidance of doubt, any application for dwellings exceeding the thresholds in Policy CP5 (including mobile home and Gypsy and Traveller sites and self-contained older people's housing, such as extra care housing, assisted living, retirement housing) will need to deliver affordable housing in line with the approach in the Core Strategy.' This does not include the provision of a care home within the scope of a residential institution and as such, there is no requirement for the provision of affordable housing.
114. Notwithstanding the policy requirements, officers have been in conversation with the developer to secure affordable bedspaces. As a result of the positive engagement, the developer has agreed to provide 2 affordable bedspaces at a rate to be agreed by the Council prior to the first occupancy of the care home. It is suggested that the rate will be reviewed after 5 years. This is secured by s106 legal agreement and weighs in favour of the proposal in terms of its social benefits.

Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area

115. Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy Development which alone or in combination is likely to have a significant effect on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection

Area will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.

116. The subtext to policy CP8 outlines that,

The Appropriate Assessment indicates that to ensure that development avoids its likely significant impact upon the SPA, the following principles will apply:

i) Dwellinghouses and other residential development (including staff accommodation in use class C2) will need to provide avoidance and mitigation measures where:

The proposal involves the provision of one or more net additional residential unit and is within 5km (linear) of the SPA. Contributions to on site SPA access management measures and monitoring in line with the Delivery Framework will be required together with provision of SANG at a minimum of 8ha/1,000 population (calculated at a rate of 2.4 persons per household). This monitoring includes the effectiveness of the SANG;

117. The application site is located within the 400-5km buffer zone of the Thames Basin Heath SPA however the proposal is for use class C2. Given that the above references staff accommodation for use class C2 and there is no staff accommodation included on the submitted plans, this proposal is unlikely to have any adverse effects upon the SPA. Consequently, no monetary contribution is sought for mitigation of potential impact.

Employment Skills Plan:

118. Policy TB12 of the Wokingham Borough Council MDD, requires planning applications for all major development (both commercial and residential) in Wokingham Borough to submit an employment skills plan (ESP) with a supporting method statement. ESPs are worked out using the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) benchmarks which are based on the value of construction.

119. The value of the construction for planning application 223256 – Oak Dale, Crowthorne has been calculated as £3,537,275.00. This is calculated by multiplying the interior floor space of 3,451m² by £1,025, which is the cost of construction per square metre as set out by Building Cost Information Service of RICS.

120. For this project value, the Employment Skills Plan should provide:

Community Skills Support E.g. work experience or CSCS training courses	5
Apprenticeship starts	2
Jobs created	2

121. If the applicant elects to pay the ES Contribution, this can be provided in lieu. The monetary contribution is calculated based on the cost to WBC supporting the employment outcomes of the plan. The cost to WBC oversee and support each employment target is £3,750. As such, a total of £15,000 (£3,750 x 4) would be required in lieu of an ESP on this application. This forms part of planning obligations that are to be secured using s106 legal agreement prior to making a decision.

Planning Balance:

122. The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Consequently, the tilted balance, as advocated by paragraph 11d of the NPPF is triggered and planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole.
123. The proposal will replace an existing dwelling with a significantly larger building of specialist care home within designated countryside that will not only be contrary to policy CP11 but will result in harm, specifically to the character and appearance of the area since there would be a change in landscape character, contrary to policies CP3, CC03 and TB21. However, for the reasons set out in this report, the extent of that harm would be limited and localised. Similarly, the conflict with the development plan policies relating to the proposal's location in designated countryside will attract moderate weight in the current circumstances where a 5-year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated.
124. On the other hand, the proposal will deliver 60 high-quality specialist care home bedspaces that will attract positive weight since inspectors have identified an unmet need for such provisions within the Borough. The proposal complies with development plan policies CP2 and TB09 which aim to provide choices of accommodation for vulnerable groups including older people and this will attract significant weight. The proposal is also broadly consistent with the intents of the NPPF in terms of provision of specialist care home and not introducing an isolated home in the countryside. This again attracts significant weight.
125. Given it's location, the development would be moderately accessible. This attracts moderate weight in the planning balance. However, the development will deliver a pedestrian crossing that will be secured by legal agreement, and this attracts additional weight in terms of benefit of the scheme. Economically, the development would bring short-term advantages in respect of construction jobs and expenditure on materials as well as job creation during operational phase. This attracts moderate weight. In terms of its social benefits, the proposal includes provision of 2 affordable bedspaces and this is afforded additional weight.
126. Additionally, the proposal will be considered equivalent to 33 dwellings (net increase of 32) that will count towards the Council's 5-yhls by releasing market dwellings elsewhere. Whilst this will attract moderate weight since there is no mechanism to ensure that all residents coming into the care home will be from Wokingham, this will nonetheless have to be considered as benefit of the scheme.
127. In applying significant weight to the provision of specialist housing for older people in this instance where the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing, it is considered that the adverse impacts of the proposal would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Overall, it is considered that the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the conflict with the settlement boundaries and the limited harm in terms of landscape character and visual impact. On this basis a decision, other than in accordance with the development plan is justified and therefore the application is recommended for an approval.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.

APPENDIX 1 - Conditions / informatives

APPROVAL subject to the following conditions and informatives:

CONDITIONS:

1. Timescale

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Approved details

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered 3210-HIA-01-XX-DR-A-[0101 P2 Location Plan; 0102 P4 Propose Site Plan; 0103 P1 Proposed Wider Site Plan; 0201 P3 Proposed Ground Floor Plan; 0211 P3 Proposed First Floor Plan; 0221 P4 Proposed Second Floor Plan; 0231 P2 Proposed Roof Plan; 0301 P1 Proposed Elevations – South & East; 0302 P1 Proposed Elevations – North & West; 0401 P1 Site Sections]; Ecological Impact Assessment by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology dated 01 November 2021; Landscape And Visual Impact Assessment dated September 2022; Foul & Surface Water Drainage Strategy dated 27 October 2022; Flood Risk Assessment dated 27 October 2022; Design & Access Statement dated September 2022 and Planning Statement dated October 2022. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. Ground and building levels

No development shall take place until a measured survey of the site and a plan prepared to scale of not less than 1:500 showing details of existing and proposed finished ground levels (in relation to a fixed datum point) and finished roof levels shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the approved scheme shall be fully implemented prior to the occupation of the building(s).

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory form of development relative to surrounding buildings and landscape. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB21.

4. External materials

Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

5. Material Strategy and Construction Waste Management Plan

Prior to the commencement of development, a material strategy and construction waste management plan shall first be submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall include the lifecycle carbon assessment as targeted in the BREEAM Pre Assessment report demonstrating the baseline and improved scenarios. The development shall be carried out in accordance with such approved details.

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.

6. Bat Licence

Demolition works shall not commence until a licence for development works affecting bats has been obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England) and a copy (or an email from Natural England that the site has been registered under the bat mitigation class licence) has been submitted to the local planning authority. Thereafter mitigation measures approved in the licence shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details. Should conditions at the site for bats change and / or the applicant conclude that a licence for development works affecting bats is not required the applicant is to submit a report to the council detailing the reasons for this assessment and this report is to be approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to commencement of works.

Reason: To ensure that bats, a material consideration, are not adversely affected by the development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policy CP7 and MDD Local Plan policy TB23.

7. Ecological Permeability and Species Enhancements

Prior to any works commencing, a detailed strategy for provision of ecological permeability and species enhancements shall be submitted to the local authority for its approval. This strategy shall be prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist and appropriate to the local ecological context. Once approved the strategy shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed by the local authority in writing.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal is in accordance with Section 41 NERC Act re. UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (Species of Principal Importance) and complies with Planning Policies for Wildlife including CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) and TB23 of the MDD (2014), and the National Planning Policy Framework which requires consideration of the potential biodiversity gains that can be secured within developments.

8. CEMP & LEMP

No development shall take place until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) & a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The CEMP shall deal with the treatment of any environmentally sensitive areas, detailing the works to be carried out showing how the environment will be protected during the works.

The CEMP shall include the following elements:

- a. The timing of the works
- b. The measures to be used during the development in order to minimise environmental impact of the works (considering both potential disturbance and pollution)
- c. The ecological enhancements as mitigation for the loss of habitat resulting from the development.
- d. A map or plan showing habitat areas to be specifically protected (identified in the ecological report) during the works.
- e. Any necessary mitigation for protected or notable species.
- f. Construction methods.
- g. Any necessary pollution protection methods.
- h. Information on the persons/bodies responsible for particular activities associated with the method statement that demonstrate they are qualified for the activity they are undertaking.

The content of the LEMP shall include the following:

- i. Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
- ii. Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- iii. Aims and objectives of management.
- iv. Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- v. Prescriptions for management actions.
- vi. Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
- vii. Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.
- viii. Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery. The plan shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The LEMP shall also include long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than privately owned, domestic gardens. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the building and permanently maintained thereafter.

Reason: To secure the maintenance of the Biodiversity Net Gain on-site provision for a minimum period of 30 years. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment).

9. Details of boundary walls and fences

Before the development hereby permitted is commenced details of all boundary treatment(s) shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development or phased as agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and highway safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6.

10. Noise Impact Assessment

Prior to commencement of development, an in-depth noise impact assessment should be carried out by an appropriately qualified consultant, this should be submitted to the local authority for approval. This can inform the design to achieve best practice and will need to address noise impact in terms of:

- Existing noise sources and how they may affect the amenity of the occupiers of the site once construction is complete, this is to take into consideration the character of the site and the nearby roads etc, and the impact on the amenity of nearby noise sensitive receptors as a result of the new development, both internal and external spaces, taking into consideration any mechanical noise arising from the use of the proposed development including, but not limited to, kitchen extractor fans.
- The impact on nearby noise sensitive receptors during the construction phase, to include vehicle movement and plant and machinery being used, as well as construction noise and any mitigation measures.
- Details of good design to protect occupiers of the proposed development from noise from existing noise sources, glazing and ventilation of the proposed properties will need to be designed to meet acceptable internal and external noise levels.

This report should identify a clear scheme of recommended works, or such other steps as may be necessary to minimize the effects of noise on nearby receptors and on future occupants of the development. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the development and permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: To protect the occupants of nearby residential properties and future occupants of the proposed development from noise. Relevant policies: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

11. Site Characterisation/Land Contamination Investigation

- a) An investigation and risk assessment should be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, (whether it originates on the site or not). The investigation and risk assessment should be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings

produced. The written report would be subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings should include:

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale, and nature of any contamination.
- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - human health,
 - property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
 - adjoining land,
 - groundwaters and surface waters,
 - ecological systems,
 - archaeological sites and ancient monuments.
- (iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11'.

b) Submission of Remediation Scheme (where required)

A detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment should be prepared and would be subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme should include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme should ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

c) Unexpected Land Contamination

If land contamination is found at any time during site clearance, groundwork and construction the discovery shall be reported as soon as possible to the local planning authority. A full contamination risk assessment shall be carried out and if found to be necessary, a 'remediation method statement' shall be submitted to the local planning authority for written approval.

Reason - To ensure that any contamination of the site is identified at the outset to allow remediation to protect existing/proposed occupants of property on the site and/or adjacent land. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) and Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3.

12. Archaeology

No development shall take place (except demolition to ground level) until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase of works) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.

Reason: The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. The condition will ensure that any archaeological remains within the site are adequately investigated and recorded in order to advance our understanding of the significance of any buried remains to be lost and in the interest of protecting the archaeological heritage of the Borough.

13. Access

Prior to commencement of the development, details of the proposed vehicular access on to Lower Wokingham Road to include visibility splays of 2.4m by 43m shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The access shall be formed as so approved, and the visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height prior to the occupation of the development. The accesses shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and used for no other purpose and the land within the visibility splays shall be maintained clear of any visual obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

14. Electric Buggy Storage Details

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted details of a store and charging points for electric disabled buggies for the occupants of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The buggies store details shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of buggies and used for no other purpose.

Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof buggy parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

15. Construction method statement

No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:

- i) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
- ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials,
- iii) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
- iv) the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate,
- v) wheel washing facilities,
- vi) measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction,
- vii) a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works.

*Reason: In the interests of highway safety & convenience and neighbour amenities.
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.*

16. Travel Plan

Prior to the commencement of the development a Travel Plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for their approval in writing. The Travel Plan shall be based on the principles set out in the Framework Travel Plan reference C21060/TP01 dated October 2022 and shall include modal targets to achieve its objectives and a timetable for their achievement. The Travel Plan shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To encourage the use of all travel modes. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policy CP6.

17. Walking and Cycling Strategy

Prior to commencement of development, details of pedestrian connections from the development to Crowthorne Station and to the nearest bus stops on Nine Mile Ride to be submitted for approval by the local planning authority. These details shall demonstrate how these routes will be upgraded. The measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation of the first dwelling.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable travel, convenience and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6

18. Electric Vehicle Charging

Prior to commencement of development, an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This strategy shall include details relating to onsite electric vehicle charging infrastructure in accordance with Appendix E of the WBC Living Streets: Highways Design Guide (2019), and details of installation of charging points and future proofing of the site. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed strategy thereafter.

Reason: In order to ensure that secure electric vehicle charging facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

19. Offsite Highways Improvement Works

No development shall commence until details of off-site works comprising the construction of a single refuge island and widening/realigning a short section of the A321 near one of the following junctions to aide pedestrian movement have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- A321/Bramley Grove
- A321/Priors Wood

The development shall not be occupied until the works have been completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable travel, convenience and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6.

20. Drainage

No development approved by the permission shall be commenced until a surface water detail Drainage Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Strategy should be supported by evidence of ground conditions and modelling of the scheme to demonstrate it is technically feasible; and where applicable adheres to the NPPF, Non-statutory technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage, Building Regulation H and local policy. The drainage scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details as Where surface water requires disposal off site (i.e., not infiltrated) the applicant must provide evidence of consent to discharge/connect through 3rd party land or to their network/system/watercourse.

Reason: To prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.

21. Landscaping

Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc). Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03, TB06 and TB21.

22. Protection of trees

- a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until an updated Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works which provides for the

retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

- b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place on site.
- c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.
- d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval in writing of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

23. Kitchen Extract details

Before any development hereby permitted commences the details of fume extraction, mechanical ventilation and filtration equipment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The equipment shall be installed prior to the first occupation of the building in accordance with the approved details and thereafter be retained, operated and maintained in its approved form and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations for so long as the use hereby permitted remains on site.

Reason: To ensure that no nuisance or disturbance is caused to the occupiers of neighbouring properties. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

24. Access to be widened

The development shall not be occupied until the vehicular access from the highway has been increased to a width of at least 4.8 metres (this work will need separate authorisation by the Borough's highway section – see informative below).

Reason: RG9 To allow vehicular access to off-street parking spaces without causing damage to the footway and kerb, and to avoid undue delay in vehicles leaving the

highway in the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

25. Access Surfacing

No building shall be occupied until the vehicular access has been surfaced with a permeable and bonded material across the entire width of the access for a distance of 10 metres measured from the carriageway edge.

Reason: To avoid spillage of loose material onto the highway, in the interests of road safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP6.

26. Parking to be provided

No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking space shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

Reason: To ensure adequate on-site parking provision in the interests of highway safety, convenience and amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

27. Cycle parking - details required

Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted details of secure and covered bicycle storage/ parking facilities for the staff of [and visitors to] the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage/ parking shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before the first occupation of the development hereby permitted and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

28. Parking Management Strategy

Prior to the first occupation of the development, a Parking Management Strategy for the management of the on-site parking shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The management of the parking within the site shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before the first occupation of the development hereby permitted and shall be permanently retained in the approved form.

Reason: to ensure satisfactory development in the interests of amenity and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6 and CP21.

29. Delivery Servicing Plan

Prior to the first occupation of the building, a Delivery and Servicing Plan be submitted to and approved in writing by LPA. The delivery plan shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before the first occupation of the development hereby permitted and shall be permanently retained in the approved form

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

30. Retention of trees and shrubs

No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the local planning authority. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting of any tree that tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the local planning authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity value to the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

31. Lighting Plan

Prior to the occupation of the development, an external lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The external lighting shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted and shall be permanently retained in the approved form.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and biodiversity. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB21.

32. Hours of Work

No work relating to the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

Reason: To protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from noise and disturbance outside the permitted hours during the construction period. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

33. BREEAM Assessment

The building shall achieve a BREEAM Very Good including demonstrating the following in relation to Assessment Issues Hea 02 and Ene 01 respectively.

- i) The BREEAM Assessment will demonstrate that the ventilation strategy provides adequate cross flow of air to maintain the required thermal comfort conditions and ventilation rates in accordance with CIBSE AM10(46) per Assessment Criteria 2.e of Issue Hea 02: Natural ventilation (p.92 of BREEAM UK New Construction Manual 2018).
- ii) The BREEAM Assessment shall demonstrate an Energy Performance Ratio (EPRNC) of 0.4 or above is achieved in accordance with the methodology set out for Issue Ene 01 in BREEAM Guidance Note 39. The development shall not be occupied until a final Certificate has been issued for it by an appropriate authority.

The development shall not be occupied until a final Certificate has been issued for it by an appropriate authority.

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.

34. Bin Store

No building shall be occupied until details of bin storage area/ facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The bin storage area and facilities shall be permanently so-retained and used for no purpose other than the temporary storage of refuse and recyclable materials.

Reason: In the interests of visual and neighbouring amenities and functional development. Relevant policy: Core Strategy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.

35. Maintenance and Exceedance Routing flow

No development shall be put in to use/occupied until a SuDS management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Also Development shall not take place until an exceedance flow routing plan for flows above the 1 in 100+40% event has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The proposed scheme shall identify exceedance flow routes through the development based on proposed topography with flows being directed to highways and areas of public open space. Flow routes through gardens and other areas in private ownership will not be permitted. The scheme shall subsequently be completed in accordance with the approved details before the development is first brought into use/occupied.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory drainage of the site and avoid flooding. It is important that these details are agreed prior to the commencement of development as any works on site could have implications for drainage in the locality.

36. Photovoltaic Array:

Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, the photovoltaic array of minimum delivery capacity 92kWp, as stated in the energy statement by Hoyle Dean dated 30 September 2022 and shown in drawing 3210-HIA-01-XX-DR-A-0231 P3, shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans and permanently so retained unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.

37. Communications Plan

No development shall take place until a Communications Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Communications Plan shall specify methods of communication between local residents and the developer and/or contractors, including the creation of a liaison group to meet in accordance with an agreed schedule during construction. The Plan shall be carried out as approved until the final completion of the development.

Reason: In the interests of neighbouring amenity and highway safety. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1, and CP3.

INFORMATIVE:

1. This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act dated xx/xx/xxxx the obligations in which relate to this development.
2. The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear, please contact the case officer to discuss.
3. Whilst it would appear from the application that the proposed development is to be entirely within the curtilage of the application site, the granting of planning permission does not authorise you to gain access or carry out any works on, over or under your neighbour's land or property without first obtaining their consent, and does not obviate the need for compliance with the requirements of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.

4. The applicant is reminded that a Demolition Notice may be required to be served on the Council in accordance with current Building Regulations and it is recommended that the Building Control Section be contacted for further advice.
5. This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent that may be required for the display of advertisements on the site for which a separate Advertisement Consent application may be required. You should be aware that the display of advertisements without the necessary consent is a criminal offence liable to criminal prosecution proceedings through the courts.
6. The Head of Highways at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham [0118 9746000] should be contacted for the approval of the access construction details before any work is carried out within the highway (including verges and footways). This planning permission does NOT authorise the construction of such an access or works.
7. Any works/ events carried out by or on behalf of the developer affecting either a public highway or a prospectively maintainable highway (as defined under s.87 New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA)), shall be co-ordinated and licensed as required under NRSWA and the Traffic Management Act 2004 in order to minimise disruption to both pedestrian and vehicular users of the highway.

Any such works or events, and particularly those involving the connection of any utility to the site must be co-ordinated by the developer in liaison with the Borough's Street Works team (0118 974 6302). This must take place AT LEAST three months in advance of the intended works to ensure effective co-ordination with other works so as to minimise disruption.

8. The applicant is reminded that there are trees on site protected by a Tree Preservation Order. It is a criminal offence to wilfully or knowingly cause damage to those trees, including their roots unless in accordance with express planning permission.
9. Great Crested Newts are a protected species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This site is wholly within an amber risk zone according to modelling undertaken to inform a Borough wide licence issued by Natural England. Amber zones contain suitable habitat and Great Crested Newts are likely to be present. The permission granted does not provide authorisation for development to proceed under the Wokingham Borough Council District Licence for Great Crested Newts. Should any Great Crested Newts or evidence of Great Crested Newts be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.
10. The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. A revised Liability Notice will be issued if this amount changes. Anyone can formally assume liability to pay, but if no one does so then liability will rest with the landowner. There are certain legal requirements that must be complied with. For instance, whoever will pay the levy must submit an

Assumption of Liability form and a Commencement Notice to Wokingham Borough Council prior to commencement of development, failure to do this will result in penalty surcharges being added. For more information see - [Community Infrastructure Levy advice - Wokingham Borough Council](#). Please submit all CIL forms and enquiries to developer.contributions@wokingham.gov.uk.

11. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of:

- a full pre-application process was undertaken by the applicant;
- addressing concerns relating to highway safety;
- addressing concerns relating to adult social care.

The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

APPENDIX 2 - Parish Council Comments (Where relevant)

- **Finchampstead Parish Council**

PLANNING REF : 223256
PROPERTY ADDRESS : FBC Centre
: Gorse Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham
: RG40 4ES
SUBMITTED BY : Finchampstead Parish Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 15/12/2022

COMMENTS:

The Council object to this application as it is not in accordance with the emerging FNDP for the following reasons:

- Over development of site in an unsustainable location.
- Three storey buildings (outside of the SDLs or Gorse Ride), are not supported by the emerging FNDP, Policy D1.
- Insufficient parking onsite which may lead to parking on the road.
- Impact of additional traffic on Lower Wokingham Road.

- **Wokingham Without Parish Council**

10th January 2023

WWPC comments on application 223256

WWPC cannot support the application as currently submitted as the following issues have not been adequately addressed: -

- The scale of the building (3 stories replacing 2), in comparison to the residential surroundings.
- An assessment of car parking requirements, including the ratio of parking provision for staff, and how this will be managed including penalties of non-compliance.
- The effect on adjoining neighbours of overlooking, light pollution, building noise, cleaning and dryer ventilation attenuation, cooking smells, waste management and protection provisions.
- The impact on site-wide use, e.g. staff / visitor / delivery traffic, particularly in rush hours / school opening / closing, and after 6pm.
- The impact on community infrastructure management and mitigation, e.g. doctor surgeries and healthcare.

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Rev	Date	Description	Drawn By	Checked By
P1	12-10-22	Issue for Planning	BG	

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Project:
Crowthorne Care Home
Lower Wokingham Road
Finchampstead, Crowthorne
RG45 6BX

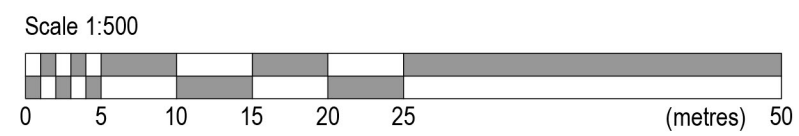
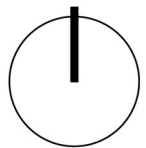
Client:
Barchester

Drawing Title:
Proposed Wider Site Plan

FOR PLANNING

HIA Project Number 3210	Scale @ A1 1:500	Subsidiary D0
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Project	Originator	Volume	Level	Type	Role	Number
3210	HIA	01	XX	DR	A	0103



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Rev	Date	Description	Drawn By	Checked By
P4	14-03-23	Parking amended and abulance bay added	ER	BG
P3	19-10-22	Issue for Planning	BG	SL
P2	29-09-22	Issue for Planning	BG	SL

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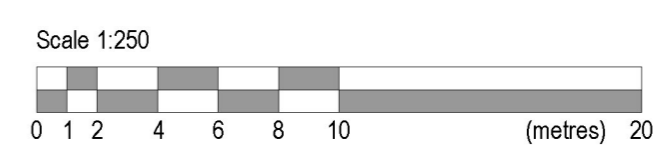
Project:
 Crowthome Care Home
 Lower Wokingham Road
 Finchampstead, Crowthome
 RG45 6BX

Client:
 Barchester

Drawing Title:
 Proposed Site Plan

FOR PLANNING

HIA Project Number	Scale @ A1	Suitability				
3210	1:250	D0				
Project	Original	Volume	Level	Type	Role	Number
3210	HIA	01	XX	DR	A	0102



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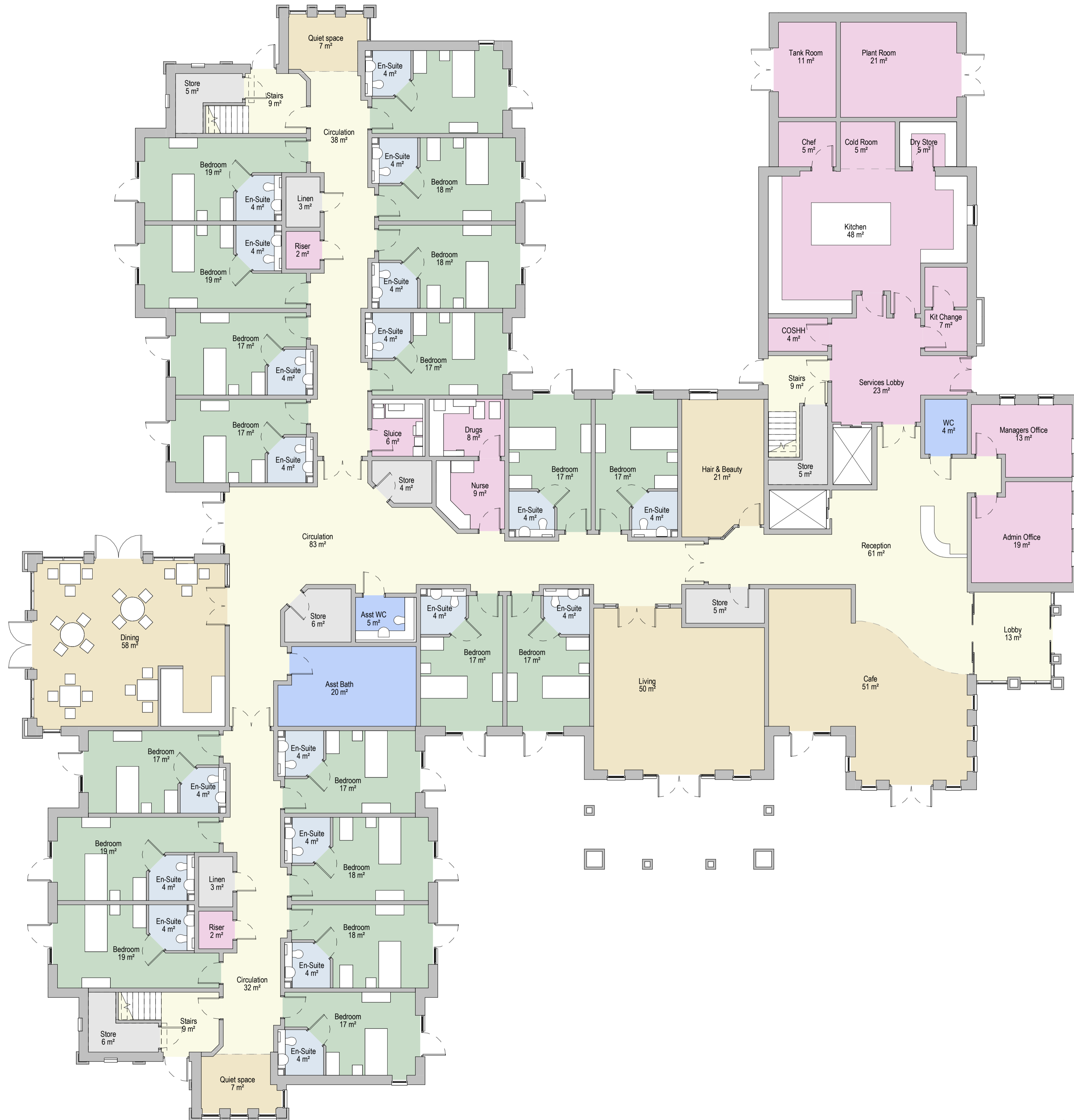
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Room Type Key

- Bedrooms
- Circulation
- Day Rooms
- En-Suites
- Sanitary
- Staff
- Storage



Schedule of Accommodation

Ground Floor

Care Group 1	
19 Bedrooms	
Living	- 50 m ²
Dining	- 58 m ²
Total day space* = 108 m ²	
(5.7 m ² per resident)	

* Day space calculation based upon rooms listed only
 * Excludes communal spaces such as cafe, cinema and small seating areas
 * Bedrooms measured to 1.8m headroom usable (excludes hatched areas)

P3	26-09-22	Planning	SLW	BG
P2	30-08-22	Second Draft	SLW	BG
P1	22-07-22	First Draft	SLW	BG
Rev	Date	Description	Drawn By	Checked By

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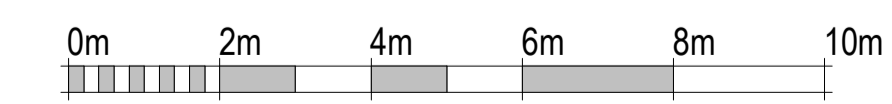
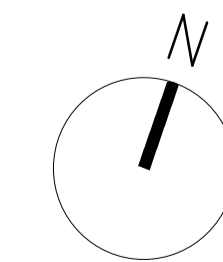
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Project:
Crowthorne 60 Bed Care home
Lower Wokingham Road
Finchampstead, Crowthorne
RG45 6BX

Client: Barchester

Drawing Title:
Proposed Ground Floor Plan

For Planning Submission



SCALE 1:100 @ A1

HIA Project Number	Scale @ A1	Suitability				
3210	1: 100	DD				
Project	Originator	Volume	Level	Type	Role	Number
3210 - HIA - 01 - 00 - DR - A -						0201

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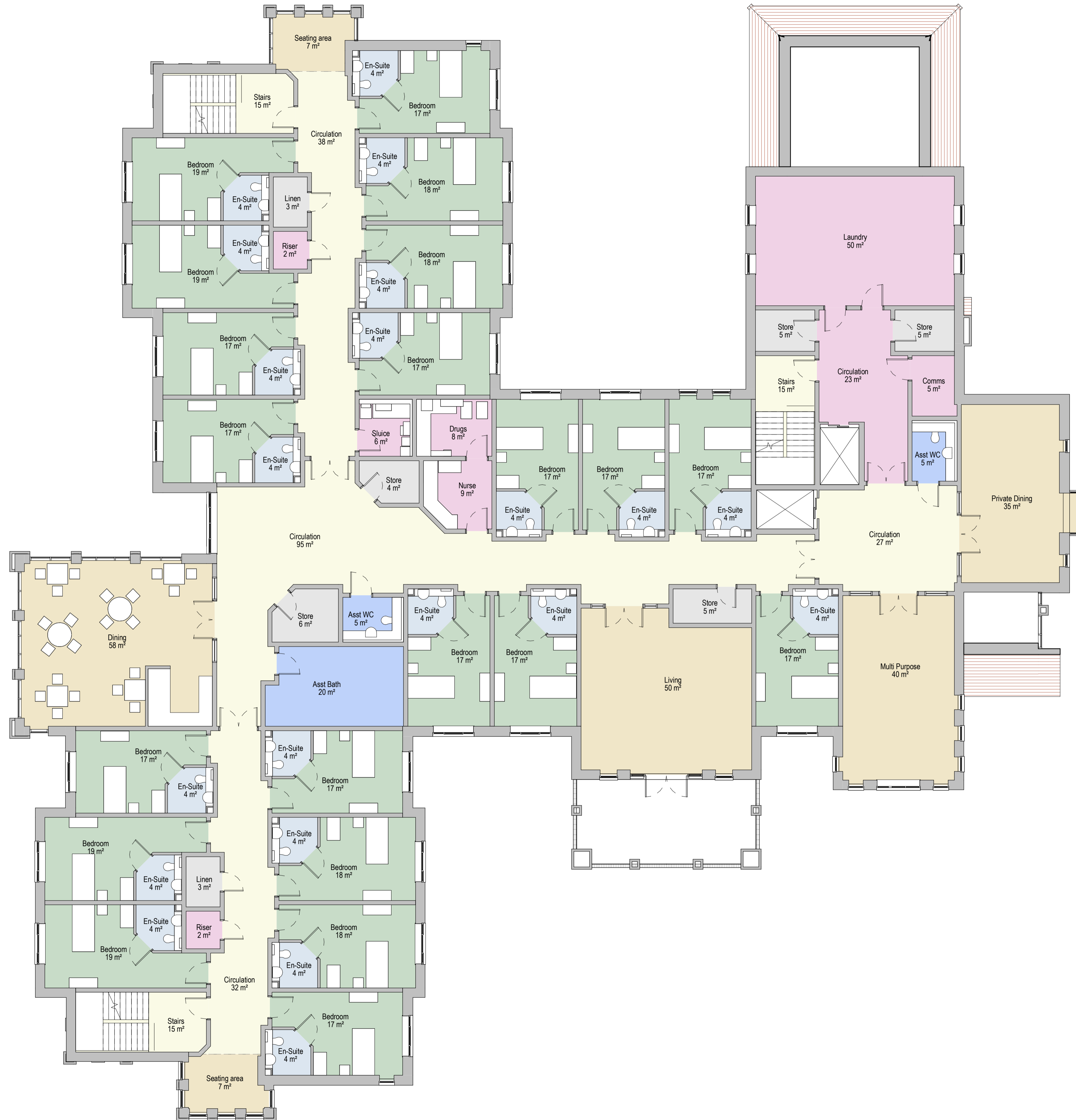
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Room Type Key

- Bedrooms
- Circulation
- Day Rooms
- En-Suites
- Sanitary
- Staff
- Storage



Schedule of Accommodation

First Floor (GIA = 1161 m ²)	
Care Group 1	
21 Bedrooms	
Living	- 50 m ²
Dining	- 58 m ²
Total day space* = 108 m ²	
(5.2 m ² per resident)	

* Day space calculation based upon rooms listed only
 * Excludes communal spaces such as cafe, cinema and small seating areas
 * Bedrooms measured to 1.8m headroom usable (excludes hatched areas)

75

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn By	Checked By
P3	26-09-22	Planning	SLW	BG
P2	30-08-22	Second Draft	SLW	BG
P1	22-07-22	First Draft	SLW	BG

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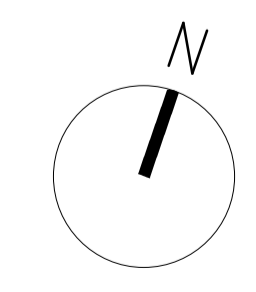
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Project:
Crowthorne 60 Bed Care home
Lower Wokingham Road
Finchampstead, Crowthorne
RG45 6BX

Client: Barchester

Drawing Title:
Proposed First Floor Plan

For Planning Submission



SCALE 1:100 @ A1

HIA Project Number	Scale @ A1	Suitability				
3210	1:100	DO				
Project	Originator	Volume	Level	Type	Role	Number
3210 - HIA - 01 - 01 - DR - A - 0211						

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Room Type Key

- Bedrooms
- Circulation
- Day Rooms
- En-Suites
- Sanitary
- Staff
- Storage



Schedule of Accommodation

Second Floor (GIA = 1004 m²)

Care Group 1
20 Bedrooms

Living - 49 m²
Dining - 58 m²

Total day space* = 108 m²
(5.4 m² per resident)

* Dayspace calculation based upon rooms listed only
* Excludes communal spaces such as cafe, cinema and small seating areas
* Bedrooms measured to 1.8m headroom usable (excludes hatched areas)

P4	26-08-22	Planning	SLW	BG
P3	06-09-22	2nd Floor WC added	SLW	BG
P2	30-08-22	Second Draft	SLW	BG
P1	22-07-22	First Draft	SLW	BG
Rev	Date	Description	Drawn By	Checked By

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Project:
Crowthorne 60 Bed Care home
Lower Wokingham Road
Finchampstead, Crowthorne
RG45 6BX

Client: Barchester

Drawing Title:
Proposed Second Floor Plan

For Planning Submission

HIA Project Number 3210	Scale @ A1 1:100	Suitability DO
Project 3210 - HIA - 01 - 02 - DR - A - 0221	Originator HIA	Volume 01
Level 02	Type DR	Role A
Number 0221		



SCALE 1:100 @ A1

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NOTES

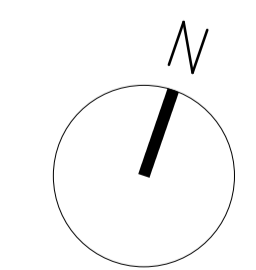
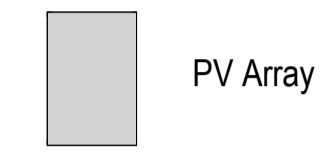
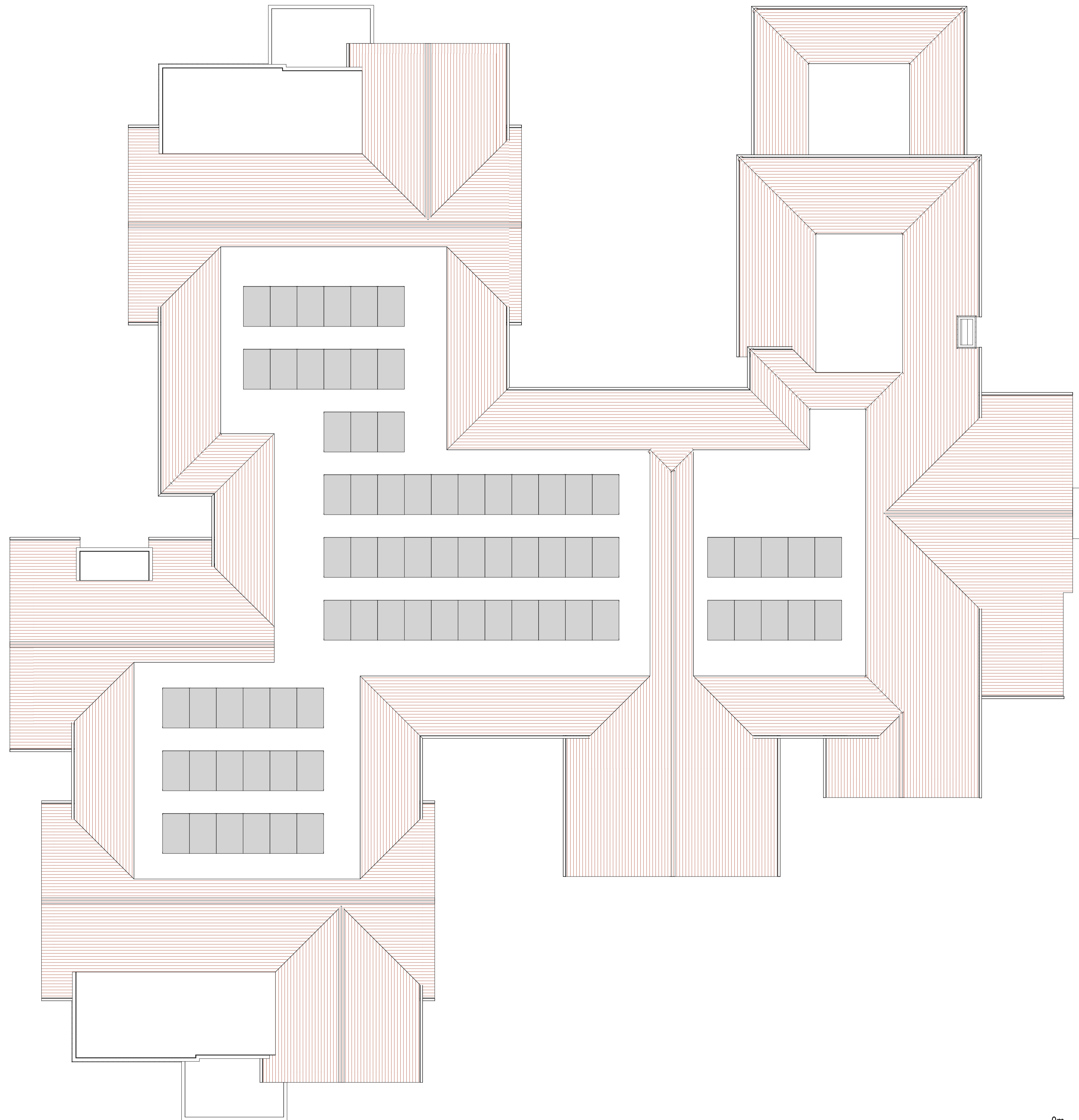
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SCALE 1:100 @ A1

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn By	Checked By
P3	28-06-23	PV Layout Added		BG
P2	30-08-22	Second Draft	SLW	BG
P1	22-07-22	First Draft	SLW	BG

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RG45 6BX

Client: Barchester

Drawing Title:
Proposed Roof Plan

For Planning Submission

HA Project Number	Scale @ A1	Suitability
3210	1:100	DO

Project	Originator	Volume	Level	Type	Role	Number
3210 - HIA - 01 - XX - DR - A -						0231

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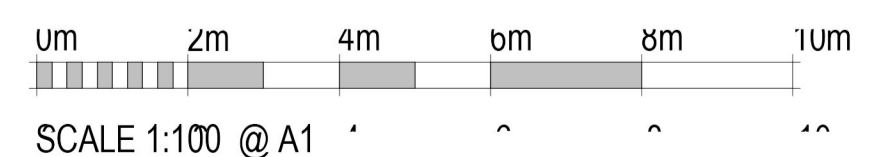
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East Elevation



South Elevation



Rev	Date	Description	SLW	BG
P1	28-09-22	Planning	SLW	BG

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Drawing Title:
 Proposed Elevations - South & East

For Planning Submission

Plot Number	Scale	Sheet No.
3210	1:100	D0

Project	Originator	Version	Level	Type	Date	Number
3210	HIA	01	XX	DR	A	0301

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West Elevation



North Elevation

10m
 SCALE 1:100 @ A1

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn By	Checked By
P1	26-09-22	Planning	SLW	BG

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Drawing Title:
 Proposed Elevations - North & West

For Planning Submission

Project Number	Scale	Sheet No.
3210	1:100	D0

Project	Originator	Version	Level	Type	Rev	Number
3210	HIA	01	XX	DR	A	0362

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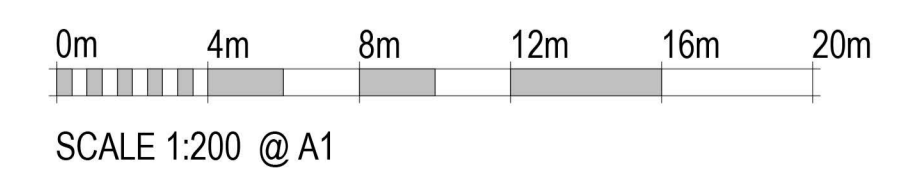
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1 Site Section (looking North)
 1 : 200



2 Site Section (looking East)
 1 : 200



Rev	Date	Description	Drawn By	Checked By
P1	28-09-22	Planning Set	SLW	BG

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Drawing Title:
 Site Sections

For Planning Submission

Site/Project Number	Scale	Sheet No.
3210	1:200	00

Project	Original	Version	Level	Type	Date	Number
3210 - HA	-	01	-	XX - DR	-	A - 0401

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