

# Agenda Item 47.

<b>Development Management Ref No</b>	<b>No weeks on day of committee</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Listed by:</b>
171420	18	Winnersh	Winnersh	Scheme of delegation

**Applicant** Whitbread PLC

**Location** 613 Reading Road, Winnersh RG41 5UA. **Postcode** RG41 5UA

**Proposal** Full planning application for the demolition of existing building and erection of 102-bed Premier Inn hotel, with internal bar/restaurant area and Costa drive-thru, with associated parking and landscaping.

**Type** Major  
**PS Category** 6  
**Officer** Mark Croucher

**FOR CONSIDERATION BY** Planning Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017  
**REPORT PREPARED BY** Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

## SUMMARY

The application site is in a Major Development Location in the defined settlement boundary of Winnersh. The principle of the demolition of the existing building and the erection of the hotel, restaurant and coffee shop drive-thru is considered to be acceptable. The scale and massing of the development is contextually appropriate for the area, as is the proposed modern vernacular. The site will maintain large areas of soft landscaping surrounding the building and this will break up the mass and scale of the building and the large parking area.

The development will have an acceptable impact on the amenity of the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings. Sufficient parking will be accommodated into the scheme and no detrimental highway safety implications will arise. The application demonstrates that the proposal can be accommodate safely on the site and will not exacerbate existing flood pressures. The proposal will also have an acceptable impact on local ecology.

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in all aspects and compliant with the relevant national and development plan policies. The application is accordingly recommended for approval subject to conditions.

## PLANNING STATUS

- Major Development Location
- Flood Zone 3 & 2
- Green Route Enhancement Area.
- TPO Trees.

## RECOMMENDATION

APPROVAL, subject to the following conditions:

### Time Limit

1. 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).*

### **Approved plans**

2. This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered ref: 1670 0K1; 02; 03B; 05 and 99B. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by 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.*

### **Material Samples/details**

3. Prior to the erection of the new building hereby permitted, 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.*

4. Prior to the erection of the new building hereby permitted, details of the window recess shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details thereby agreed shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: to ensure the building has a satisfactory appearance.*

### **Trees & Landscaping**

5. a) The development hereby approved shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment from Ascerta revision F. unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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*

6. Except for demolition, remediation or piling, the development hereby approved shall not commence until a scheme of landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, which shall specify species, planting sizes, boundary treatment, tree pits spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained. Details of boundary treatment and hard landscaping shall also be included. Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s).

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the occupation of the buildings in the case of retained trees and shrubs) die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

*Reason: To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development)*

7. No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without previous written consent of the local planning authority; any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

*Reason: To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development)*

### **Highway safety and parking**

8. No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until vehicle parking and turning spaces has been provided in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The vehicle parking and turning space so-approved shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and the parking space remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times and the turning space shall not be used for any purpose other than vehicle turning.

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

9. No building shall be occupied until secure and covered parking for cycles has been provided in accordance with the approved drawing(s)/details. The cycle parking/storage shall be permanently so-retained 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 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

10. 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.*

11. Prior to the commencement of the development a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The travel plan shall include a programme of implementation and proposals to promote alternative forms of transport to and from the site, other than by the private car and provide for periodic review. The travel plan shall be fully implemented, maintained and reviewed as so-approved.

*Reason: To encourage the use of all travel modes. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policy CP6.*

### **Drainage / Flooding**

12. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a flood response plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details thereby agreed shall be implemented in perpetuity unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: To ensure the development is flood resilient and remains safe during flooding events.*

13. No building hereby permitted shall be occupied until surface water drainage works have been implemented in accordance with details that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Before these details are submitted an assessment shall be carried out of the potential for disposing of surface water by means of a sustainable drainage system in accordance with the principles set out in Annex F of PPS25 (or any subsequent government guidance), and the results of the assessment provided to the local planning authority. Where a sustainable drainage scheme is to be provided, the submitted details shall:

- i) provide information about the design storm period and intensity, the method employed to delay and control the surface water discharged from the site and the measures taken to prevent pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface waters;

- ii) include a timetable for its implementation; and
- iii) provide a 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.

*Reason: This is to prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.*

14. The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment, reference 13598, prepared by Simpson Consulting Engineers and dated 25 April 2017, Revision C. and the following measures detailed within the FRA:

- i) There shall be no raising of grounds levels above existing, other than for the proposed buildings shown in figure 1670/01J, Proposed Site Layout.
- ii) The finished floor level of all buildings shall be no lower than 39.62m AOD as stated in section 8.3 of the FRA.

*Reason: To ensure the development is built in accordance with the measure in the Flood Risk Assessment.*

### **Environmental Health**

15. All plant, machinery and equipment installed or operated in connection with the carrying out of this permission shall be so enclosed and/or attenuated that noise therefrom does not exceed at any time a level of 5dB[A] below the existing background noise level [or 10dB[A] if there is a particular tonal quality] when measured at a point one metre external to the nearest residential or noise sensitive property.

*Reason: To ensure that no nuisance or disturbance is caused to the occupiers of neighbouring properties. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

16. No development shall take place until a scheme to deal with contamination of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include an investigation and assessment to identify the extent of contamination and the measures to be taken to avoid risk when the site is developed. Development shall not commence until the measures approved in the scheme have been implemented.

*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 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) and Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3.*

17. Prior to the operation of the hotel; restaurant and coffee shop drive-thru, the mechanical ventilation of each shall be installed in accordance with the recommendations in the Ventilation & Extract Statement Issue 1.3 unless otherwise

agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: To ensure the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers is protected by reason of smells and odours.*

18. 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 8:00a.m and 6:00p.m. Monday to Friday and 8:00 a.m. to 1.00p.m. Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

*Reason: In the interests of the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.*

19. No customer shall be permitted to be on the premises of the A3 use (coffee shop drive-thru) hereby permitted outside the following times:

[05:30 – 22:00] Mondays – Saturday,

[08:00 – 20:00] Sundays and public holidays.

*Reason: To safeguard residential amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC06.*

20. No external customer (other than guests of the hotel) shall be permitted to be on the premises of the A3 restaurant use hereby permitted outside the following times:

[05:30 – midnight] Mondays – Saturdays,

[08:00 – 23.00] Sundays and public holidays.

*Reason: To safeguard residential amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC06.*

21. No deliveries shall be taken in or dispatched from the site outside the following times:

[06:00 – 22:30] Monday - Saturdays

[08:00 – 20:00] Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays

*Reason: To safeguard residential amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC06 and TB20.*

## **Ecology**

22. No development hereby permitted shall commence until details of biodiversity enhancements, to include bird and bat boxes, tiles or bricks on and around the new buildings and native and wildlife friendly landscape planting has been submitted and approved in writing by the council.

*Reason: To incorporate biodiversity in and around developments in accordance with Paragraphs 109 and 118 of the NPPF.*

## **Permitted development rights**

23. The windows in the east elevation of the development hereby permitted shall be fitted with obscured glass and shall be permanently retained. The window shall be non-opening unless the parts of the window which can be opened are more than 1.7 metres above the finished floor level of the room in which the window is installed and shall be permanently so-retained.

*Reason: to avoid overlooking into neighbouring dwellings and a loss of privacy.*

### **Employment Skills Plan**

24. Prior to the commencement of development an employment skills plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Employment Skills Plan shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved timetable unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: to secure and employment skills plan in accordance with policy TB12.*

### **Sustainable design and construction**

25. The development hereby approved shall be built in accordance with the recommendations in Energy and Sustainability Statement – Issue 3 that sets out how the building will result in a 10% reduction in carbon emissions. The development shall also achieve the necessary mandatory Building Research Establishment Assessment Method (BREEAM) requirements or any future national equivalent, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

*Reason: To ensure the development results in a 10% reduction in carbon emissions in accordance with policy CC05*

### **Refuse collection**

26. 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.

Waste management plan (including litter bins)

*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.*

### **Informatives**

1. 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: addressing concerns relating to highway safety and residential amenities. 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.
2. 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.
3. Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel.: 0118 9746000.
4. 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.

5. The applicant is advised to consider the rubbish and recycling information on the Council's website: <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/rubbish-andrecycling/collections/information-for-developers/>.
6. Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant or the Council's ecologist 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.
7. This application does not give permission for any signage to be erected on the site. The applicant is advised to apply for advertisement consent for signage on the site and/or the building.
8. The applicant's attention is drawn to the presence of a c.2m wide service strip running adjacent to the surfaced roadway. The service strip forms part of the adopted public highway. It is an offence for any works to be undertaken within this service strip without express permission in writing from the highway authority. The Head of Technical Services at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham (0118 9746000) must be contacted for the approval of any such works.
9. The requisite Travel plan would need to comply with the latest national and local guidance:
  - 1) NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport)
  - 2) The Essential Guide to Travel Planning (DfT, March 2008)
  - 3) Delivering Travel Plans Through the Planning Process (DfT, April 2009)
  - 4) A Guide on Travel Plans for Developers (DfT)
  - 5) Making Residential Travel Plans Work (DfT, June 2007) All accessible at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/travelplans/>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-local-transport>

## PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant.

## SUMMARY INFORMATION

Site Area	1.97 hectares
Previous land use(s) and floorspace(s)	B1(c) Office
Existing floor space	3,501 sqm
Proposed land use	Mix of C1 (Hotel) A3 (restaurant & Café)
Proposed floor space	4,201.7 sqm
Existing parking spaces	Cars:160: Cycle 0
Proposed parking spaces	Cars 190: Cycle 18



## CONSULTATION RESPONSES

<b>Highways</b>	No objection subject to conditions 8 -11.
<b>Planning Policy</b>	No objection
<b>Environmental Health</b>	Recommend approval with conditions 16 -22.
<b>Ecology</b>	No objection subject to condition 23.
<b>Landscape and Trees</b>	No objection subject to conditions 5 -7.
<b>Employment Skills Plan</b>	An employment skills plan will be required as per condition 25
<b>Flooding and Drainage</b>	No objection subject to conditions 12-14.
<b>Environment Agency</b>	No objection subject to condition 14.
<b>Network Rail</b>	<p>The developer/applicant must ensure that their proposal, both during construction and after completion of works on site, does not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- encroach onto Network Rail land</li> <li>- affect the safety, operation or integrity of the company's railway and its infrastructure</li> <li>- undermine its support zone</li> <li>- damage the company's infrastructure</li> <li>- place additional load on cuttings</li> <li>- adversely affect any railway land or structure</li> <li>- over-sail or encroach upon the air-space of any Network Rail land</li> <li>- cause to obstruct or interfere with any works or proposed works or Network Rail development both now and in the future</li> </ul>
<b>Winnersh Parish Council</b>	No objection.

## REPRESENTATIONS

2 letters received objecting to the development points raised (in summary):

- Smells and odour from the hotel (paragraphs 36)
- Litter and contamination (paragraphs 39 and condition 27)
- Additional noise created through the development will disrupt neighbouring residents. (paragraphs 16-19 and 36 -40)
- There are already two large hotels nearby and this development is not necessary. (paragraph 6)
- The proposal will degrade the air quality. (paragraph 38)
- The development will exacerbate flooding. (paragraphs 29 - 35)

1 letter received supporting the development but no comments made.

### APPLICANTS POINTS

- The proposal will result in sustainable development.
- The site is within a Major Development Location, and being situated in the immediate vicinity of bus stops and Winnersh Triangle Railway Station.
- The development will result in economic benefits to the area.
- A Premier Inn hotel is a mid-market offering, which is not currently provided by the Travelodge or the Holiday Inn.
- The redevelopment of a brownfield site and inclusion of landscape and ecology enhancements, ensures that the proposals maximise the potential for environmental gain.
- The site has been actively marketed for several years and the accompanying Employment Market Report confirms that the 'loss' of the existing Use Class B floorspace will not be detrimental to the wider provision of such floorspace in the Wokingham / Reading area.
- There are no other more suitable sites for the proposal and it is sequentially preferable when considering flood risk.
- The accompanying Transport Statement confirms that the application proposals would not give rise to significant highways impacts or be detrimental to safety.
- The scale, bulk, massing and design of the building is appropriate for the site.
- There will be no harmful impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents.

### PLANNING POLICY

NPPF	Chapter 1: Building a Strong Competitive Economy Chapter 2: Ensuring the Viability of Town Centres Chapter 4: Promoting sustainable transport Chapter 7: Requiring good design Chapter 10: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change Chapter 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Core Strategy	CP1 Sustainable Development CP2 Inclusive communities CP3 General Principles for Development CP6 Managing travel demand CP7 Biodiversity CP9 Scale and location of development proposals CP14 Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre CP15 Employment Development
MDD Local Plan	CC01 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 Development Limits CC03 Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC05 Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks CC06 Noise CC07 Parking CC09 Development and Flood Risk (from all sources) CC10 Sustainable Drainage

TB11 Core Employment Areas  
 TB12 Employment Skills Plan  
 TB15 Major Town, and Small Town/ District Centre development  
 TB16 Development for Town Centre Uses  
 TB21 Landscape Character  
 TB23: Biodiversity and Development

## PLANNING ISSUES

### Principle of development

1. The application seeks the erection of a 102 bed hotel with 190 cover branded restaurant and coffee shop drive-thru following the demolition of the existing B1 building. The existing building comprises two floors with the ground floor having been used mainly for scientific research purposes and therefore comprising a mixture of laboratory, small office and light industrial uses. It is understood that the first floor has been used for office purposes and also includes a small canteen area. The proposal therefore constitutes a change of use from B1 to a mix of C1 & A3 uses.
2. The application site is located within the Major Development location of Winnersh as defined by MDD Policy CC02. As per policy CP9 of the Core Strategy, development in this location is acceptable subject to it being of an appropriate scale and providing it accords with other more specific policies within the development plan.
3. The proposed hotel, restaurant and drive-thru coffee shop are classified as '*town centre*' uses as per paragraph 3.72 of the MDD local plan and the glossary definition at Annex 2 of the NPPF. The site is located outside of any designated town/district centre and therefore policy TB16 applies which requires a Sequential Test for all proposals for '*town centre*' uses outside of the borough's designated town/district centres and a Retail Impact Test for proposed retail and leisure uses above 500 sqm outside of these centres. This is to ensure that the vitality and viability of the Borough's town/district centres is not compromised by new town centre uses outside of these areas.
4. The applicant has submitted a Sequential Test with the application that considers alternative sites and assesses their availability, suitability and viability. A total of 5 sites were identified and assessed: 2 of which are located in Woodley parish, 2 in Wokingham parish and 1 in Earley Parish. The Planning Statement also includes a flooding Sequential Test (considered further in the drainage and flooding section of this report) which identifies and discounts a number of nearby sites within Winnersh on flooding terms, while also briefly commenting on availability and suitability for the proposed use.
5. On the basis of these assessments the applicant concludes that there are no available sequentially preferable locations for the development. The number of alternative sites is considered a reasonable sample in order to demonstrate a lack of alternative sites which are better related to an existing centre. It is therefore considered that the Sequential Test sufficiently evidences that there are no better alternative sites available.
6. Notwithstanding the sequential consideration above, the applicant's position is that

the proposal seeks to serve the particular choice of staff and visitors to the Winnersh Triangle business park. The NPPG recognises that certain main town centre uses will have particular market and locational requirements meaning they can only be situated in certain locations. In this regard the submission states that the applicant (Whitbread) consider there to be two distinct and legitimate markets to be served by new hotels. One of these is Wokingham town centre where the applicant is already committed to delivering a hotel as part of the town centre regeneration programme (as per mixed use allocation SAL08 and planning permission 153125); the other being this business park location. It is therefore the applicant's case that it is delivering facilities within a town centre already and that there is a market need for these 'town centre' uses in an out of town location. On balance, the fact that both options are being commercially pursued seemingly indicates that there is a market need for both hotels.

7. The site is located within development limits in a Major Development Location in Winnersh and is not located within a designated Core Employment Area. The development would result in the loss of 3,501m<sup>2</sup> of Class B1 floor space.
8. Core Strategy Policy CP15 (Employment Development) states '*any proposed change of use from B1, B2 and B8 should not lead to an overall net loss of floor-space in B Use within the Borough*'. The Central Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) Economic Development Needs Assessment Report (October 2016) sets out a requirement for net additional B1a/B1b floorspace in the period 2013-2036. While this study is only indicative at this stage of what the emerging Local Plan Update's employment policy requirement might be, it demonstrates that there is likely to be a continuing need to protect employment floorspace within the borough. The application is accompanied by an 'Employment Market Report' (dated March 2017) and an 'Agency Marketing Report' (reference EM / TALS, dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017), both of which are prepared by Haslams. These reports state that the building has been vacant since 2012 and it is understood that prior to this the building was occupied by a research and development company from 1996 until 2012.
9. The report states that the site comprises grade B / C space which is described as being unfit for purpose and requiring significant refurbishment to make it suitable for occupiers in the current market. The reports describe the building's layout as being prohibitive to sub-division and therefore this makes sub-letting to multiple occupiers difficult. It also states that refurbishment is not considered to be a viable option. The property was marketed on a leasehold basis for approximately 4 years from 2012 – 2016 by Hanover Green for 'Office & Lab space' to which no interest was received. In 2016 it was then marketed on a freehold basis as a potential re-development opportunity which led to Whitbread's acquisition of the site.
10. It is considered that, on balance, the evidence of marketing provided is acceptable and proportionate and demonstrates that sufficient efforts have been made to attract occupiers to the site for its current lawful use. The Planning Policy Team has considered the application in detail and has raised no objection to the principle of redeveloping the site set out in the application submission.
11. The principle of development is acceptable subject to the other material considerations set out in this report.

### **Design and impact on character and appearance of the area**

12. The proposed building is a four storey linear structure which fronts towards Reading Road, overlooking new landscaping and car parking areas. It will measure approximately 16 metres in height and will be approximately 3.90 metres higher than the existing office building. The massing of the building is broken up by a varied roof form, accommodating flanking stair towers and a main entrance. The proposed material palette will also aid in breaking up the long north and south elevations by varying materials, recessed glazing and brise soleil. The scale of the building is in keeping with the context of three storey employment buildings to the north in Winnersh Triangle and the Showcase Cinema to the west. Two storey houses lie to the east, but are buffered and screened by a maturing tree line on this boundary edge. The visibility of the building will be broken up by existing and proposed planting and it is considered that the scale of development is appropriate for the site.
13. The ground floor elements of the building will comprise of the restaurant and reception associated with the hotel and coffee shop drive-thru. The building will have a flat roof and linear form spanning laterally across the site. The ground floor elements serving the coffee shop drive-thru and restaurant will have a different material palette to the hotel to highlight the different uses and this will comprises of brick and timber and red cladding. The hotel will have a more muted colour pallet which includes white render and various types of grey cladding. Condition 4 is also recommended to ensure an appropriate window recess is incorporated into the building so that the structure has visual texture. Overall it is considered that the modern vernacular of the building appropriately addresses the scale and massing of the structure and relates satisfactorily to the character and appearance of the locality.
14. The landscaping on the site is an integral part of the development and this is considered in further detail in the Trees and Landscaping section of this report.
15. On balance it is considered that the design of the proposed development is acceptable and it will have a satisfactory impact on the character and appearance of the area.

### **Impact on Neighbours**

16. The existing building is located approximately 55 metres away from nearest residential dwelling (611 Reading Road) to the east. The proposed building will be located further to the north east and consequentially it will be located further away from 611 Reading Road (63m) but closer to the dwellings in Riverdene Drive by approximately 25 metres. The submitted plans depict the proposed building being approximately 27 metres from the rear gardens of the properties in Riverdene Drive and 44 metres to the rear elevations.
17. The proposed building will not encroach into a 25° unobstructed zone of daylight to any of the neighbouring properties rear windows. There is an existing buffer of planting and trees and long the common boundary. The landscape proposal includes an increased landscape buffer along this boundary which is approximately 22 metres deep. The proposal has a much shallower footprint than the existing building, which has a square footprint, and the scale and bulk of the proposed building will therefore appear less than the existing structure when viewed from east.

18. The side windows in the eastern elevation serve an emergency stairwell and condition 24 is recommended to ensure they are obscurely glazed in perpetuity. It is considered that the proposal will not result in any overlooking that would detrimentally impact the neighbouring residents.
19. Taking all the above into consideration, it is considered that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents. Noise and disturbance concerns are considered in the Environmental Health section of this report.

### **Highways and Parking**

20. The vehicular access will remain in the same position as existing. A Transport Statement, Travel Plan and Delivery & Service Plan have been submitted with the application. Trip rates have been mapped for both the existing and proposed uses. The proposed uses of the site will result in a greater number of vehicle movements during the AM and PM peak hours: Approximately 63 more movements during the morning peak and 44 during the afternoon peak.
21. In order to fully understand the potential impact the additional trips would have on the operation of the site access, a traffic modelling exercise has been undertaken using software for a priority junction. It is estimated that 70% of vehicles would travel to / from the west (i.e. towards the Loddon Bridge Roundabout to access the A329(M), Reading town centre or travelling south on the B3270) and 30% of vehicles would travel to / from the east on the A329 (i.e. to Winnersh town centre or towards Wokingham). The proposals would lead to a marginal increase in delay for vehicles entering / departing the site, however, queues would remain short (the calculation in the Transport Statement Addendum equates to less than 1 vehicle) and there would be no impact on the through-flow of traffic on Reading Road. There would be no material change in the junction's operation, with the existing level of service maintained. It is also worth noting that the Transport Statement included a review of local collision data, confirming there are no pre-existing highway deficiencies and no accident history at the site access (although the access has been stopped up for several years).
22. An additional pedestrian access will be provided to the west of the site and this will improve permeability and encourage walking to facilities and services to the west and north.
23. The proposed development will include a total of 188 car parking spaces (166 spaces for the hotel and integrated/restaurant and 22 spaces for coffee shop unit). There would be 10 disabled bays: 8 by the hotel access and 2 by the coffee shop drive-thru. 17 cycle parking spaces will be provided in the form of 9 Sheffield style cycle stands capable of accommodating 18 cycles. The level of parking has been considered for the site as a whole as many trips would be linked. The Highway Engineer considers that a satisfactory level of parking on the site will be provided.
24. A Swept Path analysis has been submitted depicting satisfactory manoeuvrability on the site. A Delivery and Servicing Plan & Travel Plan has been submitted and is acceptable. The recommendations contained therein are secured by condition 11.

25. It is considered that the proposed development will have an acceptable impact on highway safety and satisfactory parking will be provided. The Highway Engineers raises no objections subject to recommended conditions 8 -12.

### **Trees and Landscaping**

26. The application site includes large areas of undeveloped greenery which includes mature trees, hedgerows and scrub planting. The vegetation to the site boundary is part of the character of the area and the landscape proposal has been devised to maintain the natural appearance of the vegetation. The trees around the periphery (including 3 protected trees) will be maintained and areas of wildflower planting will be incorporated. On this point the Tree and Landscape Officer has advised:

*'Trees located adjacent to site boundaries, particularly to the east and north, generally make a welcome contribution to the screening of views to and from the adjacent houses and railway line. To the south and west however, it will be commercially advantageous to increase visibility to the site, therefore it is proposed that a heavy thinning and block removal exercise be implemented, for which an element of site direction will be required of the project arboriculturist. The removal of low quality / poor condition trees and blocks of scrub, with an element of pruning back overgrown hedgerow scrub and identification of selected trees of better quality for retention, will ensure that visibility of the site can be achieved whilst minimising any potentially negative effects of vegetation removal. Compensation for the loss of vegetation, as well as biodiversity enhancements can be achieved by way of the landscape proposal for the site.'*

27. The ornamental planting associated with the existing building will be removed. This area of planting is to the western side of the building, to the southern part of front terrace and over the level change, to the car parks to the east of the site. Replacement ornamental planting around the proposed building and car park will be incorporated. It is considered that this in association with the landscaping scheme for the overall site will result in a proposal that maintains the verdant appearance of the site. The hard surfaced car parking areas will not be prominent features from outside of the site and the landscaping will partially screen this feature.
28. The overall landscaping scheme will break up the scale and massing of the proposed building whilst allowing it to be a visible feature within the public realm. The Tree and Landscape Officer has recommended the application for approval subject to the recommended conditions 5 – 7.

### **Drainage and Flooding**

29. The western and southern part of the site is within Flood Zone 3a (high probability of flooding) whilst the remainder of the site is in Flood Zone 2 (medium probability of flooding). The proposed development will result in a 'more vulnerable' use. Only the landscaping areas are located within Flood Zone 3a. The development would reduce the ground level footprint of buildings compared to the existing situation. The measured footprint of the existing building is 2397m<sup>2</sup>, while the measured footprint of the proposed building would be 1293m<sup>2</sup>. Thus, the building footprint would be reduced by 1104m<sup>2</sup>, which would increase the sites ability to store flood water. The development is configured such that the bedrooms associated with the 'more vulnerable' hotel use shall be located at above ground floor level.

30. The application has been supported with a Flood Risk Assessment and a Sequential Test. The Sequential Test assessment should consider whether there are suitable, available and viable sites, which are located within Flood Zone 1 or such sites which fall partly in Flood Zone 1 and Flood Zone 2. Such sites would have the potential to be sequentially preferable.
31. The proposed development is to serve the specific need and customer base of people visiting the Winnersh Triangle Business Park. Therefore the site needs to be located in close proximity to this area. The Sequential Test sets out 5 possible alternative sites within a commercially viable catchment. Only one of the sites would be sequentially preferable in flood risk terms but this would be unviable because of the policy constraints of retaining B1 uses in the Winnersh Triangle Business Park. Overall the Sequential Test confirms that the application site is the most appropriate for the intended use.
32. It is not considered that the Exception Test is applicable in this instance as the hotel; restaurant and coffee shop drive-thru are located in Flood Zone 2. Notwithstanding this it is considered that the proposed development would result in wider sustainability benefits to the community, to an extent that outweighs the degree of flood risk. In these respects, the proposals will result in the redevelopment of a long-vacant previously developed site and (in so doing) contribute to the physical regeneration of a prominent gateway site. The development will result in economic benefits to the borough in terms of jobs created directly and indirectly. It is considered that the application would meet the requirements of the Exception Test were it required to do so.
33. The flood risk and drainage can be appropriately mitigated on the site and this is set out in the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment. Surface water will be attenuated via a geo-cellular storage tank with discharge to the Thames Water surface water sewer to the north, as per the existing situation. Also car park runoff will run through trapped gullies, linear drainage channels fitted with sump units and petrol interceptors so as to reduce pollution. The development is projected to have a 70 year life span and a 30% allowance for climate change has been assessed to determine that 594.9m<sup>3</sup> of attenuation will be required and 663m<sup>3</sup> is proposed. Also SuDS for the development will be managed by the developer in accordance with the SuDS manual.
34. Section 8 of the submitted Flood Risk Assessment identifies a maximum predicted flood depth of 0.52m along the evacuation route to land outside of the floodplain. Given the area is located at the outer edge of the floodplain it is anticipated that floodwaters would be relatively still and would not be deemed a “danger to the general public”. The site would be registered with the EA flood warnings service as part of the Flood Response Plan.
35. The Drainage Engineer has considered the proposed development and is satisfied there is no detrimental flooding or drainage implication subject to recommended conditions 12 – 15. The Environment Agency has been consulted and has raised no objection to the proposed development subject to the measures detailed in the Flood Risk Assessment and condition 15.



## **Environmental Health**

36. The application site borders residential dwellings on the eastern boundary. The application has been supported by a Noise Impact Assessment. The plant and machinery of the building will be located to the north of the building adjacent to the railway line. The nearest plant to the residential properties will be behind the coffee shop drive-thru and this will be approximately 38 metre away. The Noise Impact Assessment demonstrates that noise from the plant and machinery serving the building will be marginally lower (1 db) than the surrounding background noise. The measurements used in the assessment have taken a '*worst case scenario*' approach so that any difference between the calculated and real values would be favourable. The Noise Impact Assessment demonstrates that the plant and machinery to the development will not result in a level of noise that would detrimentally impact the amenity of the neighbouring residents.
37. A Ventilation & Extract Statement has been submitted and sets out there will be no impact on the neighbouring residents with regard to smells and odours. The Environmental Health Team has considered this and raises no objection. Condition 18 is recommended to ensure the mechanical ventilation is implemented in accordance with the submitted document.
38. The air quality impact of the vehicles using the development is predicted to be negligible based on the development trip data provided by the appointed transport consultant. This impact is set out in the submitted Air Quality Assessment. The predicted air quality / dust impacts are within acceptable limits for purposes. The Environmental Health Team have recommended condition 10 to ensure dust is controlled during construction and demolition works.
39. A Phase one risk assessment has been submitted. The reports indicated that some remediation works are required. The Environmental Health Team has advised that a standard contaminated land condition (condition 17) can be applied to ensure contamination is properly addressed to appropriate standard for proposed use.
40. The proposed development will utilise external lighting. An external lighting plan has been submitted and this depicts there would be no detrimental level of light spillage into the neighbouring residential gardens or the surrounding area.

## **Sustainable design and construction**

41. MDD Local Plan Policy CC05 (*Renewable Energy*) requires that schemes of over 1000m<sup>2</sup> gross floor space should provide for a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions through on-site renewable energy or low carbon sources. An Energy and Sustainability Statement has been submitted with the application and this sets out how the development will deliver a 10% reduction in carbon emissions by utilising air source heat pumps and combined heat and power systems (CHP). The development must achieve the necessary mandatory Building Research Establishment Assessment Method (BREEAM) requirements or any future national equivalent. The building will also utilise construction techniques so that it is more thermal efficient. The sustainable design and construction of the building will be secured by recommended condition 26.

### **Ecology**

42. An The ecological report has been submitted with the application and identified that one of the Trees on the site had potential to host roosting bats and that the site is suitable for use by reptiles and dormouse. Further surveys have been undertaken and conclude that the risk of protected species being affected by the proposals is minimal. The Council's ecologist has considered this information and raises no objection subject to the recommended condition 23.

### **Employment Skills Plan**

43. Policy TB12 of the MDD local plan 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. It has been advised that the scale of the development would result in a requirement for 5 working experience placements; 2 apprenticeship starts; and 2 full time jobs. It is considered that an employment Skills Plan can be secured by the appropriate condition 25.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The application site is in a Major Development Location in the defined settlement boundary of Winnersh. The principle of the demolition of the existing building and the erection of the hotel, restaurant and coffee shop drive-thru is considered to be acceptable. The scale and massing of the development is contextually appropriate for the area, as is the proposed modern vernacular. The site will maintain large areas of soft landscaping surrounding the building and this will break up the mass and scale of the building and the large parking area.

The development will have an acceptable impact on the amenity of the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings. Sufficient parking will be accommodated into the scheme and no detrimental highway safety implications will arise. The application demonstrates that the proposal can be accommodate safely on the site and will not exacerbate existing flood pressures. The proposal will also have an acceptable impact on local ecology.

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in all aspects and compliant with the relevant national and development plan policies. The application is accordingly recommended for approval subject to conditions.

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

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