

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
182460	07/03/2019	Wokingham	Wescott;

Applicant	Webb Core Offices
Site Address	West Forest Gate, Wellington Road, Finchampstead Wokingham RG40 2AT
Proposal	Full planning application for demolition of existing B1 (office) building and the erection of 2 buildings to provide 49 apartments, car parking, vehicular and pedestrian access and landscaping.
Type	Full
PS Category	1
Officer	Laura Callan
Reason for determination by committee	Major application

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 13 February 2019
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place

<p>SUMMARY</p> <p>This item is before the Planning Committee as it is a major planning application.</p> <p>This planning application is for the demolition of the existing B1 (office Building) and the erection of 2 buildings to provide 49 apartments (with a mix of 13 x 1 bed, 20x 2 bed units and 5 x 3 bed units.), car parking, vehicular and pedestrian access and landscaping.</p> <p>The site is located within The Wokingham Town Centre but is not allocated as an area of opportunity within the Wokingham Town Centre SPD (WTC SPD) and as such no particular form of development or improvement has been set out for the site.</p> <p>The proposal would include 5 car free 1 bed units with 44 unallocated parking spaces to serve the remaining units which would accord with the WTC SPD that requires development in the Town Centre to reduce the provision of car parking and to enhance parking management. A legal agreement is being prepared to secure a contribution towards MyJourney, a car club space and public realm improvements including enhancements to Denmark Street.</p> <p>The design of the proposal has been carefully considered. The layout takes into account the constraints of the site whilst integrating with the grain of the surrounding development, complement the existing and Carnival pool developments, responding to their alignment and character, whilst still providing a private south facing amenity area for the development. As such, the proposal would not result in harm to the character of the area, harm to the amenity of prospective or surrounding residential occupiers, and the proposal is acceptable in this respect.</p> <p>It has been demonstrated that the provision of affordable housing either on site or through a contribution to provision off site is not viable and through independent assessment by the Council's consultants the council is satisfied that this is in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CP5 and NPPF. As such, the proposal is recommended for approval subject to conditions and the satisfactory completion of a legal agreement.</p>
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PLANNING STATUS

- Major Development Location
- Wokingham Town Centre
- Green Route Enhancement Area (Finchampstead Road)
- Site Listed for Inclusion in the Local Plan Update
- Tree Protection Order (TPO-0675-1994-T1 in south eastern corner)
- Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (7km zone)
- Bat consultation zone
- Landfill Buffer (250m)
- Contaminated land consultation zone
- South East Water consultation zone
- Wind turbine safeguarding zone
- Network Rail consultation zone
- Flood Zone 1

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:

A. Completion of a legal agreement to secure Employment and Skills plan, MyJourney, and public realm improvements (including car club) contribution.

B. Conditions and informatives:

Conditions:

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).

2. Approved details

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered;

- 002 rev B Block Plan
- 003 Rev C Site Layout
- 004 Rev B Ground Floor Plan
- 005 Rev A First Floor plan
- 006 Rev A Second Floor Plan
- 007 Rev A Third Floor plan

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. 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

4. Hard and Soft 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, means of enclosure, 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 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development)

5. Retention of trees and shrubs

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 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

6. Protection of trees

- a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until a scheme which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority (the Approved Scheme); the tree protection measures approved shall be implemented in complete accordance with the Approved Scheme for the duration of the development (including, unless

otherwise provided by the Approved Scheme) demolition, all site preparation work, 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.

- b) No development (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) shall commence until the local planning authority has been provided (by way of a written notice) with a period of no less than 7 working days to inspect the implementation of the measures identified in the Approved Scheme 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 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

7. Landscape management

Prior to the commencement of the development a landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than privately owned, domestic gardens, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: In order to ensure that provision is made to allow satisfactory maintenance of the landscaping hereby approved. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21

8. Nesting birds

Demolition and vegetation removal is to be undertaken outside of the bird-nesting season (March - August inclusive) or if clearance during the bird-nesting season cannot reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will check the areas to be removed immediately prior to clearance and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded, no vegetation clearance or other works that may disturb active nests shall proceed until all young have fledged the nest.

Reason: To ensure that wildlife is not adversely affected by the proposed development in line with Policy CP7 of the core strategy and wildlife legislation.

9. Bird or Bat boxes

Prior to occupation of the development, six bird or bat boxes, bricks or tiles are to be installed on or around the site under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. A brief letter report confirming that the boxes, bricks or tiles have been installed, including a simple plan showing their location and photographs of the boxes, bricks or tiles in situ, is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: To ensure that the ecological value of the site is enhanced post development in line with paragraphs 170 and 175 of the NPPF.

10. Land Affected by Contamination

Unless otherwise agreed by the local planning authority, development other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of contamination remediation must not commence until conditions A – D (below) have been complied with. If unexpected contamination is found after development has commenced, development must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination, to the extent specified in writing by the Local Planning Authority, until there is compliance with condition D (below)

A Site Characterisation

An investigation and risk assessment shall be completed in accordance with a scheme that has been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority to assess the nature and extent of contamination on the site, whether or not it originates at the site. (This is in addition to any assessment that may have been provided with the planning application) The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. The report of the findings must include:

- a. a survey of the extent, scale and nature of the contamination;
- b. an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - i. human health
 - ii. property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and services and pipework;
 - iii. adjoining land;
 - iv. groundwater and surface waters;
 - v. ecological systems;
 - vi. archaeological sites and ancient monuments
 - vii. an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option (N.B.. The assessment must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination CLR11.)

B Submission of a remediation scheme

A detailed remediation scheme that describes how the site will be made suitable for the intended use must be submitted to the local planning authority for written approval. The remediation scheme shall include, the proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, details of all works to be undertaken, the timetable of works and site management procedures. The remediation scheme shall ensure that the site cannot be declared as being contaminated under part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, in relation to the intended use, after remediation works are completed.

C Implementation of the approved remediation scheme

The approved remediation scheme shall be implemented before other groundworks or construction works commence unless a phased approach has been agreed as part of the approved remediation scheme or unless written approval is given by the Local Planning Authority. The applicant or contractor must give at least two weeks written notice before remediation works commence. Following completion of remediation works at the site, or upon completion of each phase a verification report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for written approval.

D Reporting of Unexpected Contamination

If unexpected contamination is found at any time during development this shall be reported in writing as soon as possible to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of condition A (above), and where remediation work is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared and submitted for written approval to the local planning authority, in accordance with condition B (above). Following the completion of measures set out in the approved remediation scheme a verification report shall be submitted to the local planning authority in accordance with condition C.

Reason: To ensure that future users of the site are protected from the harmful effects of contamination

11. Noise – external sources

A scheme for protecting the proposed dwellings of the approved development from rail, road and commercial noise shall be submitted, for written approval, to the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied until the approved scheme has been fully implemented and the scheme shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: To ensure that future users of the site are protected from the harmful effects of noise pollution.

12. Noise – Demolition and Construction

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

13. Deliveries during construction

No deliveries of goods or equipment relating to the development hereby approved, shall be accepted 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

14. Vibration – Off-site sources

- a. An assessment of the impact of railway induced vibration on buildings proposed within 60 metres of the railway line shall be carried out before the development commences. The assessment, which will include recommendations for remedial measures should vibration levels be found to be unacceptable, shall be submitted for written approval to the local

planning authority. The assessment shall be carried out in accordance with the method and rating system as set out in the current version of British Standard BS 6472.

- b. The remedial measures recommended in the approved vibration assessment, submitted to comply with condition*a) shall be implemented before any building is occupied.

Reason: As occupiers of those dwellings are likely to suffer from noise and vibration caused by the nearby railway to a degree that would be unacceptable and to ensure that adequate mitigation measures are taken.

15. Noise – External Plant and Equipment

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.

16. Construction Environmental Management Plan

No development shall commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The plan should detail items such as phasing of construction, lorry routing and potential numbers, types of piling rig and earth moving machinery to be utilized, onsite burning policy, dust mitigation measures, construction working hours, delivery hours, noise abatement measures and any other measures proposed to mitigate the impact of construction operations. In addition the plan should make note of any temporary lighting that will be used during the construction phase of the development. The plan shall be implemented in full and retained until the development has been constructed. Any deviation from this Statement shall be first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure disruption is minimised as much as possible during construction.

17. External Lighting

Details of external lighting of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of the development. The external lighting shall be installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved details unless the local planning authority gives its written consent to the variation.

Reason: to protect the appearance of the area and local residents from light pollution

18. Travel plan

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 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policy CP6.

19. Vehicle parking and turning

No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking and turning space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking and turning space shall be retained and maintained and managed in accordance with the approved 'Parking Management plan' details and the parking space shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times and the turning space shall not be used for any other purpose other than vehicle turning.

Reason: To provide adequate off-street vehicle parking and turning space and to allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear in the interests of road safety and convenience and providing a functional, accessible and safe development and in the interests of amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

20. Cycle parking

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted details of secure and covered bicycle storage/ parking facilities for the occupants 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 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.

21. Drainage

No construction shall take place until the details of the management of surface water run off has been provided and agreed in writing by the LPA. The approved details shall be implemented as approved.

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.

22. Renewable energy

The scheme for generating 10% of the predicted energy requirement of the development from decentralised renewable and/or low carbon sources (as set out in document . 'Energy Statement CHBS-MH-18025-1-B' shall be implemented before the development is first occupied and shall remain operational for the lifetime of the development.

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, Managing Development

23. On-site recycling

No building shall be occupied until details of bin storage area and facilities for recycling have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The bin storage and recycling 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.

Informatives:

1. 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.
2. 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 extending the determination period of the application to allow for consideration at the Planning Committee and amended plans being submitted by the applicant to overcome concerns relating to visual amenity.
3. The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. As an affordable housing development a claim for relief can be made. This is a matter for the developer. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. 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. For more information see - <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/developers/cil/cil-processes/>.
4. Thames Water comments
 - a. There are public sewers crossing or close to your development. If you're planning significant work near our sewers, it's important that you minimize the risk of damage. We'll need to check that your development doesn't reduce capacity, limit repair or maintenance activities, or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read our

guide working near or diverting our pipes.

<https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development/Working-near-or-diverting-our-pipes>.

- b. The proposed development is located within 15m of Thames Waters underground assets, as such the development could cause the assets to fail if appropriate measures are not taken. Please read our guide 'working near our assets' to ensure your workings are in line with the necessary processes you need to follow if you're considering working above or near our pipes or other structures.<https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development/Working-near-or-diverting-our-pipes>. Should you require further information please contact Thames Water. Email: developer.services@thameswater.co.uk Phone: 0800 009 3921 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm) Write to: Thames Water Developer Services, Clearwater Court, Vastern Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 8DB
 - c. With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water would advise that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water we would have no objection. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. Should you require further information please refer to our website. <https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Apply-and-pay-for-services/Wastewater-services>
 - d. Thames Water would advise that with regard to waste water network and waste water process infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application, based on the information provided
 - e. A Groundwater Risk Management Permit from Thames Water will be required for discharging groundwater into a public sewer. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. We would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures he will undertake to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. Permit enquiries should be directed to Thames Water's Risk Management Team by telephoning 02035779483 or by emailing wwqriskmanagement@thameswater.co.uk. Application forms should be completed on line via www.thameswater.co.uk/wastewaterquality."
 - f. With regard to water supply, this comes within the area covered by the South East Water Company. For your information the address to write to is - South East Water Company, Rocfort Road, Snodland, Kent, ME6 5AH, Tel: 01444-448200
5. This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act dated # January 2019, the obligations in which relate to this development.

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
172971	Demolition of existing office and erection of 77 units with vehicular and pedestrian access	Withdrawn
F/2004/2646	Installation of CCTV cameras	Approved 16 September 2004
A/1997/65924	Internally illuminated fascia sign	Approved 29 August 1997
F/1997/65288	External condensers	Approved 21 May 1997
A/1996/64526	Brick plinth and plaque	Approved 21 November 1996
42247	Three storey office building	Approved 18 February 1994
41585	Three storey office building	Approved 6 October 1993
35731	New building (outline)	Approved 8 August 1990

SUMMARY INFORMATION	
Site Area	0.46ha
Existing units	Office
Proposed units	49 Residential units (with a mix of 24 x 1 bed, 20x 2 bed units and 5 x 3 bed units),
Proposed density - dwellings/hectare	106.5dph
Number of affordable units proposed	0
Previous land use	Office
Proposed shared amenity area	340sqm
Proposed parking spaces	44 (+5 car free units).

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Crime Prevention Design Officer	No comments received
Natural England	No objection.
Environment Agency	No comment.
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue	No comments received
Southern Gas Networks	No comments received
SEE Power Distribution	No comments received
Thames Water	No comments received
NHS Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group	No comments received
WBC Biodiversity	No objection subject to conditions 8 and 9
WBC Economic Prosperity and Place (Community Infrastructure)	No comments received
WBC Drainage	No objection subject to condition 21
WBC Education (School Place Planning)	No comments received
WBC Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
WBC Highways	No objection subject to conditions 18, 19, 20 and S106
WBC Tree & Landscape	Requests additional information, but these can be addressed by condition 5, 6 and 7.

WBC Cleaner & Greener (Waste Services)	No comments received
WBC Property Services	No comments received
WBC Public Rights of Way	No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council: Objection;

- Car Parking allocation is insufficient. It is below the level set down by WBC. This will lead to Cars being parked on and possibly blocking local roads. (**See paragraphs 49 – 52**).
- Councillors would like to note that there was no pre-application consultation
- and that they would have welcomed this for this application. (*The agent has stated that prior to the submission of this application they had written letters directly to residents and the Parish Council.*)

Local Members: No comments received

Neighbours: 5 objections

- Insufficient parking provision (**See paragraphs 49 – 52**)
- Traffic generation (**See paragraph 48**)
- No Infrastructure improvements to busy roundabout (**see officer comment below**)
- Overlooking via balconies to Oakley Drive Gardens (**See section 28 – 32**)
- Developer has not engagement in pre-submission public engagement (**see officer comment below**)
- Not an allocated site (**See paragraph 5 – 10**)
- Poor design quality (**See paragraph 15 – 24**)
- No affordable housing (**See paragraph 65 – 67**)

Officer comment: Infrastructure improvements (including upon the roundabout) are underway as part of the wider Town centre redevelopment. The agent states prior to the submission of this application they had written letters directly to residents and the Parish Council.

Great Langborough Residents Association

- Design better than the previous scheme (**See paragraph 15 – 24**)
- Concern about traffic given Elms Field development (**see officer comment below**)
- Insufficient car park provision (**See paragraphs 49 – 52**)
- No affordable housing (**See paragraph 65 – 67**)
- Impact upon planned replacement of railway bridge in Finchampstead Road (**see officer comment below**)
- Requests public art (**See officer comment below**)

Officer comment:

Given the location of the blocks themselves it is considered that if works were to occur to the railway bridge then the proposal would not prejudice it. Traffic and Parking are addressed in paragraphs 49 - 52. In terms of public art, it is not considered reasonable

to request public art in this instance given the scale of the proposal and that the application site does not extend further into the public area.

APPLICANTS POINTS

- The proposal would meet local and national policy requirements
- The proposal includes upgraded landscaping taking into account and retain the existing trees on the site.
- The site is sustainably located in terms of access to sustainable modes of transport.
- The proposal would not result in harm to residential amenity for the surrounding or prospective residential occupiers.

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	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
	CP10	Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network
	CP13	Town Centres and Shopping
	CP14	Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre
	CP15	Employment Development
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	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 (from all sources)
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage

	TB01	Development within the Green Belt
	TB05	Housing Mix
	TB07	Internal Space standards
	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
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	BDG	Borough Design Guide – Section 4
		DCLG – National Internal Space Standards
		Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan: Supplementary Planning Document. Adopted June 2010.

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

1. This proposal is for the demolition of the existing office building 'West Forest Gate' and the erection of 2 blocks that would contain 49 flats, along with associated car parking and landscaping.
2. The site is located between the railway line, Finchampstead Road to the south, and Burger King and the new multi-storey car park to the north and west.
3. Block 'A' would be two stories high (plus roof) and would front onto Finchampstead Road. Block 'B' would be three stories high (plus roof) and would be located to the rear of Burger King and to the side of the new Carnival multi storey car park.
4. The blocks are arranged so that the blocks open out towards the railway with an amenity and parking area between, with the blocks closer together towards the north of the site.

Principle of Development:

5. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) 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.
6. Policy CC02 of the MDD sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map and therefore replaces the proposals map adopted through the Core Strategy, as per the requirement of policy CP9.
7. Policy CP9 sets out that development proposals located within development limits will be acceptable in principle, having regard to the service provisions associated with the

major, modest and limited categories. As the site is within a major development location, the proposal is acceptable in principle.

8. The site is located within the limits of Wokingham Town Centre and as such, consideration must be had to Policy CP14 – *Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre* of the Core Strategy and the Wokingham Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (WTC SPD).
9. The site does not form part of an area recognised by the WTC SPD as an area of opportunity and as such has not been earmarked for a particular form of development. As such the proposal in principle would not conflict with the provisions within the SPD.
10. Paragraph 118(c) of the NPPF requires the Council to give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land. The reuse of the land, where it involves the removal of a 'bad neighbour' use and its replacement with residential dwellings, is supported

Loss of office use

11. Policy CP14 requires proposals to ensure that development cumulatively provides and maintains, amongst other uses, office accommodation and housing. In addition, Policy CP15 – employment development – states that any proposed changes of use from B1, B2 and B8 should not lead to an overall loss of floorspace in B Use within the Borough.
12. The agents have submitted a Marketing Assessment by Page Hardy Harris Limited. The report sets out that parts of the building have been vacant since 2009, and that the building is cosmetically and mechanically coming to an end of its economic life. It would not be viable to refurbish the office space, common parts, external fabric and plant to sufficiently capture tenant demand. The building was marketed in 2016 to the present day for a reasonable amount and terms, however limited interest was had. Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of B Class floor space within the Borough, given the lack of interest in such space, there would be limited harm as a result of the proposal in this respect.

Wokingham Town Centre

13. Policy CP14 of the Core Strategy – Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre – sets out that Wokingham is considered suitable for Growth and proposals should retain and enhance the historic market town character of Wokingham and maintain its position in the Berkshire retail hierarchy via a list of criteria. This includes strengthening shopping in the retail core, conserving and enhancing historic quality and interest and ensuring, amongst other factors, and development cumulatively provides and maintains housing and office accommodation.
14. The propose use of the site is residential and would not undermine retail activity in the retail core of the town centre. In addition, it would not affect the setting of any town centre heritage assets. The proposal would result in a loss of offices, but these have been demonstrated to not be in demand/ viable and the proposal would provide the benefit in terms of the reuse of brownfield land for housing. As such, the proposal

Character of the Area:

15. Whilst the site itself has not been earmarked for particular development within the masterplan (WTC SPD) it is located adjacent to such development and within the Town Centre and as such consideration must be had to how the proposal relates to its masterplan and subsequent applications.

[illegible]

Heights

18. The proposal is considered to accord with the general heights of the buildings in this part of the Town Centre. The proposed Block A towards Finchampstead Road would be 3 stories in height (plus roof) and given the land levels and distance apart would not appear out of character with that of those along Finchampstead Road. Block B, located towards the car park, increases in height via an additional floor, would be taller than the adjacent leisure centre and associated residential units. However it

would be lower than the car park and would not appear out of place in this town centre location. As such, the proposal would not conflict with the existing development within this part of Elmsfield.

19. For clarity, if the town centre regeneration proposals under application 172012 were not to be fully implemented, given the relationship of the proposal with the built form along Finchampstead Road, along with its town centre location, the form and size of the proposal would not be harmful to the character of the area.

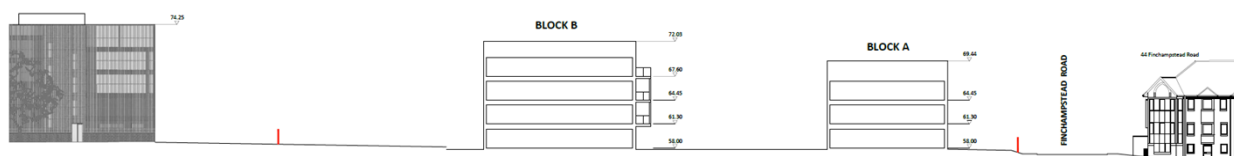


Figure 2: cross section between the Finchampstead road and the existing multi-storey car park.

Siting and form and design

20. The site is irregular and relatively constrained, being located adjacent to the railway and being triangular in shape. The proposal has been subject to pre-application advice and a number of design iterations so that the development integrates successfully with both the existing and planned surrounding built form.
21. The resulting scheme results in two blocks in a broken 'V' configuration, providing an active frontage addressing the street scene towards Finchampstead Road and the Carnival car park area, whilst providing an enclosed private amenity area towards the railway. The blocks are closer to each other adjacent to Carnival pool area and further apart towards the railway.
22. The blocks have been designed to complement the forms and materials of the proposals within Elms Field. This includes the Elms Field development opposite (currently under construction under planning reference 153125) and the flats along Finchampstead Road. As a result, the proposals would complement the existing and proposed development in the area.
23. Block A towards Finchampstead Road is positioned so that it allows the trees which make a positive contribution to the street scene to be retained without harm and the retention of this structural landscaping will assist with immediate integration of the building into the surroundings. The line of trees towards the railway are also proposed to be retained and there are also opportunities for further landscape enhancements which will further enhance the setting of the building. Full landscaping details will be secured via **conditions 4 and 5**.
24. As such, the proposed design is considered appropriate for the town centre location and would satisfactorily integrate with existing and proposed developments in accordance with the provisions of the WTC SPD and CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Residential Amenities: Surrounding residents

Overlooking and Overbearing

25. The Borough Design Guide, in order to maintain a sense of privacy and avoid a sense of enclosure, requires that buildings with a front-front relationship, with an eaves height over 2 stories should have a separation distance of 15m between them. The proposal would result in a distance of 24.4 – 26.8 metres between the proposed Block A and the existing flats opposite on Finchampstead Road and this separation distance would exceed the design guideline and would not result in unacceptable overlooking or overbearing to neighbouring occupiers within Finchampstead Road.
26. The residential gardens of Oakey Drive would be 30m from the flank elevation of block A and 26.5 m from the flank elevation of block B and these separation distances would exceed the Borough Design Guide of 15m and there would be no unacceptable overlooking window to window. There would be an increase in the perception of overlooking for residents within Oakey Drive given the change to the use of the site. However, Block A would provide oblique views over Oakey Drive which would have less impact and Oakey Drive is situated within an urban environment, adjacent to the raised railway line embankment, the current Office Building and the Carnival Pool Car Park. As such, the gardens serving dwellings within Oakey Drive already have some degree of overlooking from these features at present. The proposal would not result in an unacceptable level of overlooking or overbearing that cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of these occupiers.

Daylight and sunlight

27. Given the distance between the proposed blocks and the surrounding residential occupiers and the orientation of the buildings, it is considered that the proposal would not result in a harmful loss of daylight and sunlight to the surrounding residential occupiers.

Residential Amenities: Prospective residents

Overlooking and Overbearing

28. The block A and B are aligned in a broken 'v' shape with a separation distance measuring around 13.7m at its narrowest point.
29. The Borough Design Guide sets out that that development over 2 storeys should have a back to back distance of 30m or a front to front distance of 15m. However, it also states '*Standards and measurements should only be applied once the overall character and nature of the scheme is agreed. Schemes in more urban settings or with a more intimate character will often require a tighter, more compact layout, for instance...*'.
30. The proposed internal layout and window positioning has been designed to avoid direct window to window overlooking and a harmful sense of enclosure and loss of privacy to occupiers of the units at these narrowest points between block A and B.
31. The flats are arranged around a central corridor so that the front of the flats face out from the stair core. In effect, both elevations form the front elevations of the units in terms of functionality and therefore in terms of impact upon privacy. Where the proposed units (between block A and B) are separated by 13.7 metres, there are no primary habitable windows facing each other along this elevation on any of the floors

and as a result no unacceptable overlooking would occur. Elsewhere between the blocks there are no directly overlooking windows as they would be oblique to each other at a distance of 20 metres. This would meet the 15m separation distance for front to front elevations as specified by the Borough Design Guide.

32. In addition, the proposal is located within an urban setting of the Town Centre where the character is of a tighter and more compact relationship and layout. The resulting proposal would complement the character of the town centre and would not result in a harmful sense of enclosure or result in harm to privacy. As a result, the proposal would accord with the principles of the Borough Design Guide in this respect.

Daylight/sunlight

33. Given the orientation of the units and the proximity of the blocks there would be some shadowing and reduction in sunlight to some of the proposed units during the day, however it is considered that this would not be to the extent that it would be harmful to residential amenity of prospective occupiers.
34. In terms of shadowing, all of the units would receive some degree of shadowing throughout the day. This would be particularly for those habitable rooms facing between the blocks, however given the orientation of the blocks, their distance apart and arrangement of windows, this would not be to the extent that it would be harmful to residential amenity. It should be noted that on the ground floor where the blocks are at their closest and where most shadowing would occur that there are no habitable windows and the cycle and bin stores are located in this area. The block A Façade towards Finchampstead Road would face onto a line of trees. Whilst this would result in some shadowing from the trees, given that the trees here are not dense and there are spaces between them to allow light filtration, it is considered that such shadowing would not be adverse to residential amenity. The prospective occupiers of the units would also be aware of the trees when purchasing the property and an outlook onto mature trees of value can also be considered a positive aspect of the scheme. Given the distance between block B and the car park it is considered that there would not be a harmful level of shadowing.
35. In terms of skylight, the proposal would not result in any of the units having a harmfully low level of skylight penetration. The bedrooms of B1 and A7 would receive a level of skylight below the 25 degrees angle required by the BRE. However, as these are bedrooms whose primary use is at night time and there is a living room area with a better level of skylight, it would not result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of occupiers. There are no habitable rooms on the ground floor as the units narrow beyond this point. All other habitable windows between the units would receive adequate levels of skylight.
36. In terms of daylight and sunlight within the building, all of the units would have long windows to make sure of available light. Unit B1 and B16 would have a small bedroom window facing to the north, and an obscured glazed window serving the kitchen. This is not ideal, however given that the living room/dining area would be served by a wider window, that the bedroom is used mainly for night time, the proposal would not be considered to result in unacceptable harm to living conditions in this respect.

Noise

37. The site is located adjacent north of the Waterloo to Reading railway line and adjacent west of the busy A321. The site is also located adjacent to a fast food restaurant and adjacent south-east of a public multi-storey car park. Noise and vibration associated with these adjacent land uses may negatively impact on the amenity and health of future residents.
38. A Noise Impact Assessment (Ref: 17046 West Forest Gate R01B dated 17th August 2018 by dBx Acoustics Ltd) has been submitted with the application.
39. The proposal provides external balconies and a shared private amenity area. The range of noise to these balconies would be between 51 – 65dB(A) during daytime and at night time between 52 and 74dB(A). It is unlikely that the balconies would be used during the night time where noise is higher. During daytime, only those balconies towards the north and south elevations of the blocks would be affected by noise levels higher than 50dB(A) – which is the level set by the World Health Organisation for ‘moderate community annoyance’ for outside living areas. The site is also located within a Town centre Location in an area of leisure activities where noise would be expected.
40. In terms of internal noise levels, noise assessment concludes that it would be possible to achieve the necessary noise mitigation through the provision of noise attenuating sound insulation, and attenuated ventilation to enhance the sound insulation of windows. Further details of such measures are secured by way of **condition 11**.

Air quality/ odour pollution

41. The proposal site is located close to fast food restaurant Burger King where there is likely to be an element of odour pollution. The submitted Odour Assessment Report (dated December 2018 by REC Ref: AQ103377-2R1) concludes that odour from the adjacent Restaurant kitchen exhaust is likely to have a negligible impact on the proposed development due to the dissipation of such odour. As such, the proposal would not result in harm in this respect.
42. The proposal is located within the nearby Wokingham Town Centre Air Quality Management Area. The agent has submitted an Air Quality Assessment which has concluded that the proposal would not result in a significant impact upon this AQMA. Pollutant concentrations across the site have also been assessed and do not exceed the relevant Air Quality Standards at the proposed residential units and so the site is considered suitable for the proposed residential use without mitigation required.
43. The report has also assessed the potential for fugitive dust emissions from the construction works at the site. The potential risk of dust soiling is predicted to be low from demolition activities and medium from construction, earthworks and trackout activities. The potential risk of human health impacts is predicted to be negligible for demolition activities and low for construction, earthworks and trackout activities. Various dust mitigation proposals are recommended within the report and shall be secured as part of **condition 16 (CEMP)** to prevent potential dust nuisance to nearby receptors.

Room size standards

44. The proposal would provide 24 x 1 bed, 20x 2 bed units and 5 x 3 bed units. The proposal would meet the requirements of both the Borough Design Guide and that of the Technical Housing Standards – National Described Space Standard'. As such, the proposal would be acceptable in this respect.

Amenity space

45. The Borough Design Guide sets out that in areas with an urban character, for instance, Wokingham Town centre, more compact gardens may be appropriate to create a more urban development form that relates to the local character. In these cases, it may be possible to compensate for the loss of rear garden space by providing balconies.
46. The proposal would provide each unit with a balcony on the upper floors or garden area on the ground floor of a size that would accommodate activities normally associated with a balcony. In addition, the proposal would provide a shared landscaped amenity area of around 340sqm. As such, the proposal would make adequate provision for amenity space and would accord with the borough design guide in this respect.

Access and Movement:

47. *Highway Safety:* The proposal would utilise the existing access off Finchampstead Road. Swept path analysis has been conducted and are acceptable, and the visibility splays have been provided and are acceptable. As a result, the proposal is unlikely to result in issues of highway safety.
48. *Traffic Impact:* Given the scale of the proposal and its location the council's Highways officer has advised that the traffic resulting from the proposed development would not result in an adverse impact upon the highway network.

Parking:

49. It is proposed that there will be 44 unallocated spaces for 49 apartments. Whilst the council's parking standards would require 49 spaces, in this instance the applicant has taken a holistic approach to parking, taking into account the town centre SPD and the excellent access to sustainable forms of transport which would be promoted by providing 5 managed car free units.
50. The Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document states that in the medium to long term, development within the Town Centre must seek to reduce car parking provision and to enhance parking management and sustainable transport improvements that offer comparative door to door journey times.
51. In order to support the car free units a car parking Management Plan would be introduced (to be secured through **condition 19**), and the developer obligations would contribute towards a car club space within the Town Centre, towards MyJourney and public realm improvements in the town centre, such as improving the pedestrian environment on Denmark Street between the Market Place to Wellington Road. As such given the sustainable Town Centre location and given that the

development would contribute to the medium and long term aims of the Town Centre SPD, the proposed parking provision for the development would be acceptable.

52. *Sustainability*: The proposal site is sustainably located in terms of access to public transport and is within walking distance of a number of facilities. A framework Travel plan has been submitted with this application to encourage sustainable modes of transport which will be secured by way of **condition 18**. As such, the proposal site is considered to be sustainable in terms of transport.

Flooding and Drainage:

53. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and as such the proposal is acceptable in principle. The council's Flooding and Drainage Engineer has reviewed the proposals has no objection subject to a drainage **condition no. 21** to secure details of surface water run off.

Landscape and Trees:

54. The site contains a band of semi-mature trees, and one TPO –0675-1994 - an Oak tree that is located on the southern corner of the site and is a visual landmark.
55. The trees contribute positively to the Green Route of Finchampstead Road. No Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted as part of this proposal. The proposal would be around 10 away from the stem of the TPO Oak tree, and as such it is considered in this instance that an AIA could be submitted by way of a condition to ensure that the proposal would not result in harm to this tree as a result of the proposal and during its construction.
56. The proposed flats of Block A would front onto the bank of semi-mature trees along Finchampstead Road. There would be a distance of around 5 metres between these trees and the flats which may result in some negative impacts upon occupiers as a result of the proximity of the trees and there could be pressure from occupants to excessively prune or fell the trees. However, these trees are not protected by a TPO and a condition 5 is recommended to ensure that if these trees are felled that they are replaced to maintain the green route. As such, the proposal would be acceptable in this respect.

Environmental Health:

Contamination

57. The Council holds no specific information to indicate that the application site may be contaminated. However, according to our records there are historic land uses in the immediate vicinity of the site including a former gas works, brick field and stonemasons yard which have the potential to cause to contamination at the application site. As the proposed residential use is sensitive, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 and the principles of sustainable development, the applicant will be required to carry out a contamination risk assessment of the site followed by remediation works if found to be necessary. This has been secured byway of a **condition 10**.

Ecology:

58. The proposal involves the demolition of the existing building and is located within an area which is suitable for supporting bat roosts. The agent has submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report (Applied Ecology Ltd). The report states that the building has a number of features potentially suitable for use by roosting bats and is assessed having “low” potential to host a bat roost. As such, in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust’s Bat Survey Guidelines, a dusk emergence survey was undertaken and no bats emerged from the building.
59. The report concludes that the building is unlikely to host roosting bats and there are therefore no bat related constraints to the proposals.
60. The report also sets out that the site is unlikely to be used by reptiles, Great Crested Newts. The report states that the building and shrubs may be host to nesting birds, and as such a **condition 8 and 9** has been applied so that vegetation removal and demolition should be taken outside the bird nesting season.

Sustainable Design/Construction:

61. Due to the replacement of the Code of Sustainable Homes with national standards in building regulations, it would not be reasonable to require the proposal to meet Code 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes in line with Policy CC04 of the MDD. However, the policy does require that all development should incorporate suitable waste management facilities including on-site recycling. It is considered that sufficient internal and external storage could be provided to accommodate this. Details of bin storage can be secured by way of **condition 23**.
62. Policy CC05 requires residential proposals of more than 10 dwellings to deliver a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions through renewable energy or low carbon technology. An Energy Statement has been submitted which states how this would be achieved through the use of solar PV panels. This can be secured by way of **condition 22**.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Special Protection Area (SPA) & Affordable Housing:

63. *Community Infrastructure Levy:* As the proposal is for new residential floor space, it would be CIL liable development.
64. *Special Protection Area:* The site is located within 7km of the TBHSPA. Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy requires that proposals of more than 50 units are required to mitigate their impact upon the THBSPA. However, as only 49 units are proposed, no such mitigation is required in this instance.
65. *Affordable Housing:* Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy sets out that for sites with a net gain of 5 dwellings or more or where residential sites of 0.16 hectares or larger, subject to viability, there is a need to provide a contribution of affordable housing. The site exceeds this threshold and therefore there is a requirement for the provision of 30% affordable housing equating to 15.3 units and this would be required to be provided on site.

66. A viability statement has been submitted with the application demonstrating that such provision would make the scheme unviable. The submitted report was subject to independent assessment which fully reviewed the build cost estimate for the proposal and the financial details including land purchase, costs and likely assumed profits. The councils viability assessor has considered that all these factors, aside from the Benchmark Land Value (which was considered to be 'optimistic') were reasonable assertions.

67. In this instance, despite the agents and council's viability assessors reaching a different amount for the Benchmark Land Value, both assessments conclude that the development would result in a deficit and as a result cannot viably provide affordable housing.

68. As such, taking into account all of the costs and profits of the development, the scheme would result in a deficit and as such, in accordance with Policy CP5, this would result in the provision of no affordable housing. As such, the proposal would not conflict with Policy CP5 in this instance.

Employment Skills:

69. Policy TB12 of the MDD requires major application to demonstrate how they will use local skills/employment in the construction of a scheme. This is to be secured by way of S106.

CONCLUSION

This item is before the Planning Committee as it is a major planning application.

This planning application is for the demolition of the existing B1 (office Building) and the erection of 2 buildings to provide 49 apartments (with a mix of 13 x 1 bed, 20x 2 bed units and 5 x 3 bed units), car parking, vehicular and pedestrian access and landscaping.

The site is located within The Wokingham Town Centre but is not allocated within the Wokingham Town Centre SPD (WTC SPD) as an area of opportunity and as such, a particular form of development or improvement has not been set out for the site.

The proposal would be of a form and scale appropriate for the town centre location and has been sensitively designed to be sympathetic to existing and proposed surrounding built form, the changing character of the town centre regeneration area and existing mature landscape features. The scheme offers benefits in terms of making use of previously developed land that has been vacant for some time that is unlikely to be attractive to prospective occupiers as the building cannot compete with modern office buildings.

It would not result in harm to the character of the area or harm to the amenity of prospective or surrounding residential occupiers, it would be located in a very sustainable location, within walking distance of train station and bus routes and would provide acceptable parking provision. It would also provide for opportunities to promote car free development through the provision of car free units and a contribution to MyJourney which promotes sustainable modes of transport. Although the proposal could not viably provide affordable housing which is a dis-benefit of the scheme, it is considered that the identified

benefits of the scheme would outweigh this and on balance the scheme represents sustainable development in context of the NPPF.

As such, the proposal is recommended for approval subject to conditions and the satisfactory completion of a S106.

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