

Agenda Item 53.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
191573	15 November 2019	Wokingham	Wescott

Applicant	Classicstone Properties
Site Address	9 Easthampstead Road, Wokingham RG40 2EH
Proposal	Full application for the proposed erection of a three storey building consisting of 22 residential units following demolition of existing building
Type	Full
PS Category	1
Officer	Simon Taylor
Reason for determination by committee	Major application (>10 units)

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

SUMMARY
<p>The existing building at 9 Easthampstead Road originally comprised a cinema, before its gradual and partial conversion to comprise offices, retail, gymnasium, studio units and a bingo hall. The building is well setback from the street frontage and given its significant height and striking architectural appearance, it is somewhat foreign in the Easthampstead Road streetscene and the Wokingham Conservation Area.</p> <p>The proposal has been revised since the original submission to address Council concerns. As amended, it involves the complete demolition of the building and construction of a part three/part four storey flat building, comprising 22 units in the form of one x studio, five x 1-bedroom, 14 x 2-bedroom and two x 3-bed in addition to a ground floor car park with access via Denton Road at the rear and a first floor communal landscaped garden.</p> <p>The application has received objections from Wokingham Town Council in seven neighbour submissions. The primary concerns relate to excessive height/built form/density, lack of off street parking, imposition of additional traffic movements and access issues in Denton Road, pedestrian safety, impacts upon neighbour amenity, inadequate internal amenity for future occupiers, lack of sustainability and a lack of affordable housing. It was also listed for the Planning Committee by Cllr Marie Gee for the above reasons in addition to archaeological matters, loss of office floor space, lack of accessibility, lack of trees and inadequate details relating to carbon offsets.</p> <p>The application follows the refusal of a previous application (181723) for a similar scheme for 27 residential units. This application is now recommended for approval, having satisfactorily addressed the previous 13 reasons for refusal either via amendments, conditions or future legal obligations. It represents a sustainable development in a town centre location and attains an appropriate built form and character for the area, there is a non-compliant but acceptable amount of parking for the location and has no unreasonable amenity outcome for neighbouring residents. The recommendation is subject specific conditions, including interior details (Condition 3), landscaping details (Conditions 4 and 5), construction management details (Condition 6), car parking and cycle details (Conditions 8 and 9), materials (Condition 11), archaeological details (Condition 12) and acoustic details (Condition 17).</p>

PLANNING STATUS

- Major Development Location
- Wokingham District Centre
- Adjacent to Primary Shopping Area
- Archaeological site
- Wokingham Conservation Area
- Adjacent to Grade II listed buildings (3-5 Easthampstead Road and Victoria Arms Public House)
- Site listed by the owner for inclusion in the Local Plan Update
- Green Route (Easthampstead Road)
- Public Right of Way along rear boundary (South Place)
- Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (5km zone)
- Potentially contaminated consultation zone
- Wind turbine safeguarding zone
- South East Water consultation zone
- Sand and gravel extraction consultation zone
- Nitrate vulnerable zone
- Flood zone 1
- Non-classified road

RECOMMENDATION

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

A. Completion of a satisfactory legal agreement(s) to secure the affordable housing contribution, mitigation to offset harm to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and, if applicable, the preparation of an Employment Skills Plan; and

B. The following conditions and informatives:

1. Timescale

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

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

2. Approved details

This decision is in respect of the plans numbered HIP/FLATS/05 Rev E, HIP/FLATS/06 Rev D, HIP/FLATS/07 Rev C, HIP/FLATS/08 Rev C, HIP/FLATS/09 Rev B, HIP/FLATS/10 Rev C, HIP/FLATS/11 Rev C and HIP/FLATS/12 Rev C, dated September 2019 and received by the local planning authority on 23 September 2019 and the plan numbered HIP/FLATS/15 Rev A, dated April 2019 and received 11 June 2019.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

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

3. Interior details

The demolition of the building, hereby permitted, shall not commence until a detailed record of the existing building in the form of 1:50 survey plans and elevations, black and white photographs of all elevations, and typical interior details has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Where any elements of the existing cinema building are identified, details of the method of removing, restoring and retaining that part of the building within the proposed development shall, in consultation with the local planning authority, form part of revised plans, which are also to be approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In order to maintain a record of the features to be altered/demolished which may form part of the historic development of the site.

Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24.

4. Landscaping details

The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a scheme of landscaping, which specifies species, soil depth, cultivation, irrigation, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted in the first floor and third floor roof terraces has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. It should also include the implementation of a green wall to the north western side (inclusive of the wall and privacy screening above) of the development alongside the first floor communal garden

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.

5. Landscaping Management Plan

The development hereby permitted shall not commence until details 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) has been 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

6. Demolition and Construction Management Plan

No development, inclusive of demolition, shall commence until a Demolition and Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan should detail items such as:

- a) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- b) Loading and unloading of plant and materials
- c) Construction working times and equipment/material delivery times
- d) Phasing of construction, lorry routing and potential numbers
- e) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- f) The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate
- g) Protection of the pedestrian route along South Place in its entirety
- h) Wheel washing facilities
- i) A scheme of works, or other steps as may be necessary to minimise the effects of dust and odour from the development
- j) Types of piling rig and earth moving machinery to be utilised
- k) Any temporary lighting
- l) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works
- m) Burning on site policy
- n) The control of noise (including noise from any piling, working hours and from delivery vehicles, as well as times when deliveries are accepted and when materials can be removed from the site)
- o) The control of pests and other vermin (particularly during site clearance)
- p) The control of surface water run-off
- q) Any other measures proposed to mitigate the impact of construction operations

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: In the interests of highway safety and convenience and neighbour amenities.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6.

7. Travel Plan

No development shall commence until a revised Travel Plan has been 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. More specifically, it shall include targets, initial mode share, a programme, future management and reference to MyJourney. 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 and Core Strategy policy CP6.

8. Car Parking Management Plan (including electric charging details)

No development shall commence until a Car Parking Management Plan, including details for an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy serving the development, is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This strategy should include details relating to on-site infrastructure, installation of charging points and future proofing of the site, details of gate operations, access for deliveries and visitors and ongoing management of the car park, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure adequate on-site parking provision in the interests of highway and pedestrian safety, convenience and amenity and that secure electric vehicle charging 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 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07 and Appendix 2 and the Council's Parking Standards Study Report (2011).

9. Cycle parking details

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, specific details of the bicycle storage facilities for occupants and visitors shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. It shall include the relocation of the bike racks to the south eastern side of the passenger lift and their relocation to an extended lobby to the north eastern side of the lift. The revised cycle storage and 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 and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

10. Biodiversity details

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 landscaping has been submitted and approved in writing by the council.

Reason: To incorporate biodiversity in and around developments.

Relevant policy: NPPF paragraphs 170 and 174, Core Strategy Policy CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB23.

11. External details

The development hereby permitted shall not commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building and all boundary treatments have 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*

12. Archaeological details

No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title have secured and implemented a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the agreed programme of work pursuant to this condition.

Reason: The site lies within an area of archaeological potential due to its location within the medieval town of Wokingham. The condition will ensure the satisfactory mitigation of any impact on buried archaeological remains so as to advance our understanding of their significance in accordance with national and local planning policy.

Relevant policy: NPPF paragraph 189 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB25.

13. Decentralised energy details

The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a scheme for generating 10% of the predicted energy requirement of the development from decentralised renewable and/or low carbon sources (as defined in the glossary of Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change (December 2007) or any subsequent version) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme 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, Core Strategy policy CP1, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC05 and the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.*

14. Employment Skills Plan/Contribution

No development shall take place on the application site until either:-

- a) An Employment Skills Plan is submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority; or

- b) An agreement is completed pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and all other enabling powers securing a planning obligation by the owner/s of the application site to pay to the Council as local planning authority the Employment Skills Plan Contribution of £3,750 index linked

provided that If option a) above is chosen, the approved Employment Skills Plan shall be fully implemented prior to the first occupation of any dwelling on the application site: and If option b) above is chosen, the no dwelling shall be occupied on the application before the Employment Skills Plan Contribution of £3,750 index linked is paid in full to the Council as local planning authority.

Reason: To provide opportunities for training, apprenticeship or other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills.

Relevant policy: Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB12.

15. Drainage details

No development shall take place until full details of the drainage system for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include:

- a) Why other methods of the SuDS hierarchy cannot be implemented
- b) Confirmation of system capacity from utilities suppliers and connection is acceptable
- c) Full calculations demonstrating the performance of soakaways or capacity of attenuation features to cater for 1 in 100 year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change and runoff controlled at Greenfield rates, or better
- d) Surface water drainage system that will reduce surface water flow rates offsite by 40% of existing brownfield site
- e) A drainage strategy plan indicating the location and sizing of SuDS features, with the base of any SuDS features located at least 1m above the seasonal high water table level
- f) Details demonstrating how any SuDS for this development would be managed throughout the lifespan of the development and who will be responsible for maintenance

Reason: To prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14, Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.

16. Piling method statement

No piling shall take place until a Piling Method Statement (detailing the depth and type of piling to be undertaken and the methodology by which such piling will be carried out, including measures to prevent and minimise the potential for damage to subsurface sewerage infrastructure, and the programme for the works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in consultation with Thames Water.

Any piling must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved piling method statement.

Reason: The proposed works will be in close proximity to underground sewerage utility infrastructure. Piling has the potential to significantly impact/cause failure of local underground sewerage utility infrastructure.

17. Acoustic details

No development shall take place until full details of the noise mitigation measures for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include:

- a) The findings of a noise survey (undertaken in accordance with BS 4142 or such other standard acceptable to the Local Planning Authority) to determine noise levels in the vicinity of the proposed development
- b) Written details and calculations showing the likely impact of noise from the development, including separation between units (in particular to Units 1 and 2)
- c) A scheme of works or such other steps as may be necessary to minimize the effects of noise from the development

All works forming part of the scheme shall be completed before any of the dwellings is first occupied.

*Reason: To protect the amenities of residents/occupiers of the development.
Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3.*

18. Project Community Liaison Group

The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall specify the provisions and details to be made to establish a Project Community Liaison Group for the duration of the construction works. The scheme shall include details of dates of meetings and a name and telephone number for residents to contact should any issues arise during the construction period. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

*Reason: In order to minimise disturbance to neighbours during construction works.
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

19. Contamination details

If contamination is found at any time during site clearance, groundwork and construction, the discovery shall be reported as soon as possible to the local planning authority. A full contamination risk assessment shall be carried out and if found to be necessary, a 'remediation method statement' shall be submitted to the local planning authority for written approval. Should no evidence of contamination be found during the development a statement to that effect shall be submitted to the local planning authority

Works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved 'remediation method statement' and a final validation report shall be submitted to the local planning authority before the site (or relevant phase of the development site) is occupied

Reason: To protect future occupiers and users of the site from the harmful effects of contamination.

Relevant policies: National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 170 and 178.

20. Construction working hours

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 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

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

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

21. Delivery hours

No deliveries of equipment and materials or the removal of rubble or the like relating to the development, including demolition and construction, hereby approved shall not be accepted other than between the hours of 9:30am and 2pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and to minimise potential disturbance with existing traffic movements, including peak hour and school drop off and pick up movements.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

22. Demolition of buildings

No construction shall take place on the site until the existing structure shown to be demolished on the approved plan has been so demolished and all materials permanently removed from the site.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB21.

23. Bin storage and collection

No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied until the residential bin storage area has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The storage area 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.

24. Parking and turning space

No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied until the vehicle parking and turning space, including the visitor/delivery parking and five vehicle charging points, has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking and turning space shall be retained and maintained in accordance with the approved details. The parking spaces, inclusive of the three accessible parking spaces, shall remain for the lifetime of the development 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.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

25. Highway Works

No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied until the access and the footway on Denton Road and the closure of vehicle accesses and the reinstatement of pavement and kerbs on Easthampstead Road have been constructed in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved on writing by LPA.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6.

26. Communal open space screening

Subject to requirements in Condition 4, the privacy screening shown on the approved drawings on the western side of the first floor communal open space shall be so-fitted and permanently so-retained to a height of 1.7m. The privacy screening shown on the approved drawings on all four elevations of the third floor shall be so-fitted and permanently so-retained to a height of 1.5m.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenities of neighbouring properties.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3.

27. Obscure glazing

The bedroom bay window to Unit 7 and the Juliette balcony balustrade to Unit 6 to the rear first floor elevation of the development hereby permitted shall be fitted with obscured glass in accordance with the approved plans and shall be permanently so-retained.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenities of neighbouring properties.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3.

28. Gates

No gates or barriers shall be erected unless set back a distance of at least 6.0m from the highway boundary and so as to open away from the highway

Reason: To ensure that vehicles do not obstruct the highway whilst waiting for gates or barriers to be opened or closed, in the interests of road safety.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6.

Informatives

1. Section 106 agreement

This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement and/or Unilateral Undertaking under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act dated # December 2019, relating to obligations for the delivery of on-site affordable housing and mitigation for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, in relate to this development.

2. Pre commencement conditions

The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.

3. Demolition notice

The applicant is reminded that a Demolition Notice may be required to be served on the Council in accordance with current Building Regulations and it is recommended that the Building Control Section be contacted for further advice.

4. Disposal of surface water

Thames Water advise that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water, no objection is raised. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. Refer to <https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Apply-and-pay-for-services/Wastewater-services>

5. Groundwater Risk Management Permit

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. Thames Water 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 020 3577 9483 or by emailing wwqriskmanagement@thameswater.co.uk.

6. Changes to approved plans

The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

7. Protected species

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent required under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for protected species. The applicant is advised to contact Natural England with regard to any protected species that may be found on the site.

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.

8. Community infrastructure levy

The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. A revised Liability Notice will be issued if this amount changes. Anyone can formally assume liability to pay, but if no one does so then liability will rest with the landowner. There are certain legal requirements that must be complied with. For instance, whoever will pay the levy must submit an Assumption of Liability form and a Commencement Notice to Wokingham Borough Council prior to commencement of development. For more information see - <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/developers/cil/cil-processes/>.

9. Travel Plan

The requisite Travel plan would need to comply with the latest national and local guidance:

- 1) NPPF Section 9 (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>

Also:

WBC Transport Plan 3 and Active Travel Plan 2011 – 2026

WBC Workplace Travel Plan Guidance and Residential Travel Plan Guidance

Documents, covering workplace travel plans and residential travel plans provide local guidance and are available on the Borough's website.

10. Discussion

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 amended plans being submitted by the applicant to overcome various concerns.

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.

PLANNING HISTORY		
App No.	Description	Decision/Date
B/A/7/1969	Illuminated vertical sign	Refused 5 June 1968
B/R/28/1968	Approved	Approved 25 April 1968
09625	New cinema (outline)	Approved 14 December 1978
12415/12416	New cinema	Approved 14 February 1980
14740	Directional and advertising signage	Approved 15 January 1981
14892	Projection room to flat	Approved 12 February 1981
16320	CoU of store to video hire and preview	One year temporary approval from 24 September 1981
16821	Pool room, office accommodation, flats and boundary wall	Approved 14 January 1982
18015	Office accommodation	Approved 26 August 1982
19996	CoU from pool room to amusement arcade	Refused 25 August 1983
20729/20730	Display windows to the north east	Approved 5 January 1984
23509	Internal alterations to create office accommodation and additional cinema	Refused 12 August 1985
24668	Internal alterations to create office accommodation, additional cinema and leisure facilities	Approved 6 February 1986
36587	Four windows to first floor	Approved 19 October 1990
37268	CoU of projection room to taxi control office	Refused 5 June 1991
37534	CoU of cinema to seven offices	Refused 3 July 1991
37535	CoU of cinema to seven bedsits	Approved 3 July 1991
BRA 9997	CoU of cinema to health fitness club	Refused 2 April 1991
38914	CoU of cinema to 13 offices	Approved 16 December 1992
39124	Non-illuminated signage (retrospective)	Refused 23 April 1992
39672	Non-illuminated fascia sign	Refused 30 July 1992
41341	Illuminated Ritz Bingo sign and non-illuminated conference sign	Refused 21 January 1994
43564	Illuminated sign	Refused 6 February 1995

F/1996/63547	CoU of offices to pizza takeaway with single storey front extension and revised forecourt	Approved 26 June 1996
F/1997/65049	External works and covered walkway	Approved 14 April 1997
A/1997/65193	Illuminated fascia sign	Refused 18 April 1997
A/1998/68668	Internally illuminated fascia sign	Approved 10 February 1999
F/1999/70694	CoU of video store to pizza take away	Approved 4 January 2000
A/2000/2129	Internally illuminated box sign	Approved 7 November 2000
F/2000/2130	Ventilation and ductwork	
F/2002/7396	Proposed change of use of part of first floor to 7 bedsit rooms	Approved 18 August 2000
F/2005/4423	CoU of vacant pizza shop to Chinese medicine clinic (Class D1).	Approved 8 June 2005
F/2005/6148	Internally illuminated sign	Approved 17 January 2006
F/2005/6314	CoU of part of first floor from Class B1a offices to Class D2 fitness and weight loss centre	Approved 22 December 2005
A/2010/0948	Internally illuminated fascia sign, externally illuminated projecting sign and window display poster	Approved 21 June 2010
181723	Residential flat building comprising 27 units with ground floor car park	Refused 14 September 2019
181724	Conservation Area Consent for residential flat building comprising 27 units with ground floor car park	Refused 20 September 2019

SUMMARY INFORMATION	
Site Area	1,280m ²
Original land use(s)	Cinema
Existing land use(s)	Offices, retail, gymnasium, bedsits and a bingo hall
Proposed land use(s)	Residential (22 units – one x studio, five x 1-bedroom, 14 x 2-bedroom and two x 3-bed)
Proposed density	171 dwellings/hectare
Number of affordable units	30% (combination of on site and commuted sum)
Existing parking spaces	6 spaces (retail use)
Proposed parking spaces	23 spaces (and 3 motorcycle spaces)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
WBC Conservation	As initially proposed, the application posed an unreasonable impact upon the character of the conservation area and the setting of the nearby listed buildings. However, the revised plans are such that no further objection is raised. Condition 3 requires further information relating to the interior of the building prior to demolition to ensure that any original cinema features are retained.
WBC Highways	No objection, including with respect to the amount of on-site car parking but only when subject to Conditions 6 (Demolition and Construction Management Plan), 7 (Travel Plan), 8 (Car Parking Management Plan), 9 (cycle storage details) and 23-24 (provision of parking and access)

WBC Trees and Landscaping	No objection, subject to a Landscape Plan and Management Plan as pre commencement Conditions 4 and 5.
WBC Ecology	No objection, subject to biodiversity enhancement details as a pre commencement Condition 10.
WBC Cleaner and Greener	No objection.
WBC Environmental Health	No objection, subject to Condition 6 requiring a Construction and Demolition Management Plan and Condition 16 requiring acoustic details.
WBC Drainage	Objections are raised on the basis of the level of drainage information, However, it is felt that this can form pre commencement Condition 15 requiring full details of the drainage system.
WBC Flood Risk	There is no flood risk and no objections raised.
WBC Affordable Housing	No objection, subject to the provision of affordable housing via legal agreement. See Informative 1.
WBC Employment Skills	No objection, subject to the provision of an Employment Skills Plan in Condition 14.
WBC Right of Ways	No objection, subject to protection of the adjacent right of way as part of the Construction Management Plan in Condition 6.
WBC Growth and Delivery	No in-principle objection in relation to the loss of office floor space.
Thames Water	No objection, subject to details of a piling method statement, measures for minimising groundwater discharges into the sewer and a Groundwater Risk Management Permit. See Condition 16.
Berkshire Archaeology	No objection, subject to archaeological details by Condition 12.

REPRESENTATIONS	
Wokingham Town Council	<p>Objections are raised on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four storey building is not in keeping with the area <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The height and form of the building is satisfactory, as noted in 'Character of the Area' and 'Heritage'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative energy sources (solar panels, grey water reuse) should be provided <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The proposal accords with the relevant policies in the Development Plan and will be subject to building regulations and Condition 13, which requires 10% of energy requirements to be from decentralised renewable and/or low carbon sources. Beyond this, the Council is not in a position to impose anything further.</p>
Ward Member	<p>Councillor Maria Gee requested that the application be listed for Planning Committee for the following reasons/based on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No works until archaeological actions are undertaken <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Refer to Condition 12 and comments in 'Archaeology'.</p>

- Bulk and scale out of character with the area

Officer comment: The height and form of the building is satisfactory, as noted in 'Character of the Area' and 'Heritage'.

- Inadequate lighting for top floor units
- Loss of light

Officer comment: The proposal will retain an adequate level of light for the proposed units, as detailed in 'Housing Amenity' (para 86-87).

- Loss of office floor space leading to increased traffic
- Increased traffic

Officer comment: The proposal is viewed as having an acceptable traffic impact, particularly given its town centre location. Refer to 'Highway Access and Parking Provision'.

- Lack of clarify about visitor parking

Officer comment: The MDD Local Plan specifies a minimum of nine unallocated and/or visitor car spaces. Instead, as detailed in 'Highway Access and Parking Provision' (para 113-119), one visitor/delivery space has been provided and whilst there is a departure of eight spaces, this is acceptable.

- Lack of clarity about accessible units

Officer comment: The proposal includes provision for three accessible units, with parking. This is detailed in 'Housing Accessibility'.

- Lack of amenity space for children

Officer comment: The amount of communal amenity space is satisfactory and generally typical of residential flat buildings within a town centre location. Refer to 'Housing Amenity' (para 88-92) for further comments.

- Lack of affordable housing (has not been addressed)

Officer comment: 30% affordable housing is to be provided, in the form of on-site provision and commuted sum to account for the part thereof. Refer to 'Affordable Housing' and Informative 1 (legal agreement).

- Design and Access Statement is unclear
- Heritage report is inadequate

Officer comment: The supporting documentation is adequate for the purposes of this assessment.

- Should meet the aims of being carbon natural
- Planting of trees should occur to offset impacts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of offsets from materials, heating, insulation and ventilation is required • An assessment of the impact upon carbon output from traffic needs to be assessed <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The proposal is acceptable on sustainability grounds and the current policies in the NPPF and Development Plan do not allow the Council to impose more stringent requirements in relation to carbon offsets.</p>
Neighbours	<p>The application was consulted to neighbours from 4-25 July 2019. Submissions were received from the following properties:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 3 Denton Road, Wokingham RG40 2DX (x3) 2) 12 Denton Road, Wokingham RG40 2DX (x3) 3) 17 Denton Road, Wokingham RG40 2DX 4) 21 Denton Road, Wokingham RG40 2DX 5) Penylan, 4C Crescent Road, Wokingham RG40 2DB 6) 17 Wescott Road, Wokingham RG40 2ER 7) 23 Sturges Road, Wokingham RG40 2HG <p>The submissions raised the following issues:</p> <p>Character</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate residential development within the area • Design is out of character • Excessive height • Excessive density/number of units • Should not be built to the same height as the existing building <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The height, built form and character of the dwelling is acceptable for Easthampstead Road and Denton Road, as noted in 'Character of the Area' and 'Heritage'.</p> <p>Traffic and access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of parking imposing on street parking • Parking access is on dangerous bend • Increased traffic congestion and safety issues • Have the traffic numbers been measured? • Denton Road is narrow and difficult to navigate • Pavement is narrowed • Air pollution from idling cars at the carpark entrance • Increased pollution from traffic at intersection <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Access via Denton Road is satisfactory and the likely traffic generation from 22 residential units is acceptable. There is a departure with the parking standards of eight spaces but this is acceptable on account of its town centre location. In the opinion of the Council's Highways Officer, no objection is raised.</p>

Existing traffic movements are detailed in a Transport Statement dated August 2018 and these have been reviewed by the Council's Highways Officer where no objection is raised. Pedestrian access remains unimpeded and acceptable via pavements to the front and rear. The amount of air pollution emanating from vehicle movements does not form a valid reason for refusal on its own and the amenity of future residents is acceptable, as noted in 'Housing Amenity (para 96).

Further comments are detailed in 'Highway Access and Parking Provision'.

Neighbour amenity

- Overlooking
- Loss of acoustic privacy from traffic, resident movements, waste collection and maintenance visits

Officer comment: There are no concerns on the grounds of neighbour amenity, as noted in 'Residential Amenities'.

- Construction noise, dust, traffic and impediment to pedestrians

Officer comment: A degree of amenity impact from construction activities is inevitable and unavoidable. Condition 6 requires provision of a Demolition and Construction Management Plan, which will aim to minimise this impact.

Internal amenity

- Lack of internal floorspace
- Lack of light to units
- Lack of storage
- Lack of amenity space and playground equipment

Officer comment: No objection is raised on the grounds of internal amenity, as noted in 'Housing Amenity' (par 78-90).

- Restaurant odours will affect units

Officer comment: The subject site is immediately to the south of a Chinese take away and pub but given the setback off the northern boundary, no concerns are raised on odour grounds.

Sustainability

- Does not address a climate emergency and the sustainability measures are inadequate

Officer comment: There are no currently no specific provisions in the Development Plan in relation to a declared climate emergency. Refer instead to 'Building Sustainability'.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of tree planting <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The site is devoid of any existing landscaping and the proposal will result in a net improvement in landscaping. Condition 4 requires further landscaping details for the communal open space area.</p> <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an over capacity of dwellings <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The proposal is supportive of the ongoing need for meeting the Council's five year housing supply and is located in a highly accessible location and on this basis, no objection is raised. Refer to Principle of Development (para 26).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be used for Council operated community use <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The site is privately owned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The application is subject to the payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy, which may be used for cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. The development itself includes cycle parking in accordance with policy requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of social housing <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Complaint affordable housing requirements are outlined in 'Affordable Housing' and secured by legal agreement (Informative 1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profit over neighbour amenity • Children should not be walking on Peach Street <p><u>Officer comment:</u> This is not a relevant planning consideration.</p>
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APPLICANTS POINTS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main demand in this location is currently for a mixture of apartments, which are well suited to central locations close to shops and transport links • The design character has been informed by the Borough Design Guide, the NPPF and other local building patterns regarding concept, scale and materials, both old and new, with colour used to distinguish between individual apartments • There are various controlled pedestrian access points around the perimeter • Although there are four levels to the development, from either street the appearance would be of two to three levels • The bedroom windows have also been angled to help reduce overlooking • The flats could be for younger or older people • The landscaped deck and its colourful and glazed surroundings are intended to create a pleasant versatile communal external amenity space • The site contains no heritage assets • Any remains can be investigated prior to rebuilding

- The whole development would be detailed to comply with the Building Regulations
- Most of the flats and circulation routes will be screened from street noise and face the landscaped deck
- The existing development is currently losing about £60,000 a year, which is obviously not sustainable

PLANNING POLICY		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
	NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance
Core Strategy 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP2	Inclusive Communities
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	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
	CP13	Town Centres and Shopping
	CP14	Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre
	CP15	Employment Development
	CP17	Housing Delivery
	Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01
CC03		Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
CC04		Sustainable Design and Construction
CC05		Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks
CC06		Noise
CC07		Parking
CC09		Development and Flood Risk
CC10		Sustainable Drainage
TB05		Housing Mix
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
TB24	Designated Heritage Assets	
TB25	Archaeology	
Other	BDG	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
	WSPD	Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD
	DCLG	National Internal Space Standards
	AH SPD	Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
	SDS SPD	Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development

1. The proposal, as amended, involves the following works:

- Demolition of the existing 3-4 storey cinema building
- Construction of a part three/part four storey residential flat building comprising 22 residential units (one x studio, five x 1-bedroom, 14 x 2-bedroom and two x 3-bed) consisting of the following:
 - Two x 2-bedroom units fronting Easthampstead Road and one x 3-bedroom unit and studio fronting Denton Road at the rear with access from Denton Road at the rear leading into a 23 space carpark with bike and bin storage
 - One x 1-bedroom unit and eight x 2-bedroom units at first floor level, centred around an elevated landscaped deck serving as a communal garden
 - Three x 1-bedroom unit and five x 2-bedroom units on the second floor
 - One x 3-bedroom unit on the third floor, with private roof terrace and separate communal roof terrace
 - Provision of pedestrian entrances from Easthampstead Road and in the south western corner adjacent to South Place and a centrally located glazed lift serving each floor with external communal walkways serving each unit
 - Reinstatement of kerb to Easthampstead Road

2. The application follows the refusal of 181723, which involved the erection of 27 residential units. It was refused for the following reasons:

1) *Impact upon the character of the area, conservation area and nearby listed buildings*

By virtue of its excessive height, bulk, volume, density and front, side and rear setbacks, the proposed development represents excessive bulk and would result in harmful impacts upon the historic and established character of the immediate areas of Easthampstead Road and Denton Road, the Wokingham Town Centre and the setting of the Wokingham Conservation Area and the Grade II listed buildings to the west. Furthermore, the proposal fails to adequately integrate between the town centre and the adjoining residential properties and the choice of materials and colours within the front and rear facades is unacceptable.

It is contrary to Paragraphs 193-196 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, Policies CP1, CP3(a), (c) and (f), CP5 and CP14 of the Core Strategy 2010, Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014, Policies R1, R7, R9, R10, R11 and NR1 of the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2012 and Sections 9.2, 9.4 and 9.6 of the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

2) *Substandard internal amenity*

The internal amenity afforded to the majority of the units is substandard. More particularly, 85% of units fail to achieve the minimum floor area standard, 85% have no storage provision, 26% have a main bedroom that is inadequately sized, 100% of units have cramped living areas and many have rooms with high noise sources adjacent to bedrooms within adjoining units. Furthermore, all of the third floor units (Units 24-29) rely on velux rooflights for windows, which compromises the usability and attractiveness of these

units, Units 1-3 at the rear of the ground floor are built to the rear boundary and the front doors and living room/bedroom windows open right onto the footpath and the first floor units open directly onto the communal amenity space, which comprises privacy levels.

This is contrary to the Technical Housing Standards, Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy 2010 (a) and (d), Policy TB07 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 and R17 of the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2012.

3) *Lack of usable amenity space*

The lack of any private amenity space for the units and the reliance upon communal open space is unacceptable as the area is likely to be underutilised because the lack of solar access. There is also likely to be an undue loss of visual and acoustic privacy between the communal space and the first floor units. This is contrary to Policies CP1 and CP3 (a), (b), (d) and (f) of the Core Strategy 2010 and R16 of the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2012.

4) *Impact upon neighbour amenity*

The height, bulk, scale and roof form of the development and the siting of windows imposes an unreasonable degree of dominance, loss of sunlight and/or daylight and overlooking towards 12 and 15A Denton Road and 18-24 Easthampstead Road. Furthermore, there is an unreasonable level of mutual overlooking between the communal open space and the office building to the west.

The harm to residential amenity is indicative of inappropriate overdevelopment of the site and is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and R15, R16 and R18 of the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2012.

5) *Inadequate off street parking*

As the parking spaces are to be allocated to specific units, the proposal does not make sufficient provision for on-site residential parking, including for visitor parking and deliveries. It would result in unacceptable on-street parking on surrounding roads and is contrary to Policies CP1 and CP6 of the Core Strategy 2010 and Policy CC07 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014.

6) *Potential loss of heritage significance*

There is a lack of information in the Planning Statement to allow the local planning authority to be satisfied that there are no internal features within the cinema building that are worthy of retention. As such, the demolition of the existing building cannot be supported as it is potentially contrary to paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7) *Loss of office accommodation*

The proposal represents a loss of available office/commercial employment space and no marketing or viability evidence has been provided in support of the application. This is contrary to Policy CP13, CP14 and CP15 of the Core Strategy 2010.

8) *Inappropriate unit mix*

By providing one and two bedroom units, the proposal fails to meet the needs of the community as it does not provide a sufficient housing mix. As such it is contrary to Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy 2010 and Policy TB05 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014.

9) *Lack of accessible units*

There is no provision for accessible units and only two disabled parking spaces, which does not accord with the intent of Policies CP2 and CP5 of the Core Strategy 2010 and Policy TB05 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014.

10) *Residential access*

The four residential access to the building are inconspicuously located and lack residential activation or an impression of arrival within the street. Pedestrian access is then via the ground floor carpark, which is not inviting for residents and visitors. This is contrary to Policy CP3(a) and (f) of the Core Strategy 2010, R13, NR3 and NR4 of the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2014 and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document.

11) *Lack of affordable housing*

The proposal does not make provision for any affordable housing, contrary to Paragraph 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, Policy CP1 and CP5 of the Core Strategy 2010, Policy TB05 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 and the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

12) *Impact upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area*

The application fails to provide SPA avoidance measures for the adverse effect on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Accordingly, since the Planning Authority is not satisfied that regulation 61(5) of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) applies in this case, it must refuse permission in accordance with regulation 49 of the 2010 Regulations and Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC. As such, the proposal conflicts with Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy and NRM6 of the South East Plan Adopted (May 2009).

13) *Lack of archaeological mitigation*

An Archaeological Desk-Based assessment is required to allow proper assessment of the known historical and archaeological information for the site and its surroundings within the market town of Wokingham. It will also allow assessment of previous and proposed impacts and to ensure any appropriate mitigation. In its absence, there is potential for the irreversible loss of archaeological artefacts and this is contrary to Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 and Policy TB25 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014.

Site Description

3. The site is located on the southern side of Easthampstead Road, 50m south east of the intersection with Peach Street. It also has rear lane access via Denton Road. It measures approximately 1280m² in area with a depth of 56m and width of 19m. On the site is a three to four storey building originally constructed as a cinema but since converted to a mix of uses, including retail, a gymnasium, offices and a hall originally occupied by Ritz Bingo.
4. The building is located at the south eastern end of the Wokingham Town Centre and Wokingham Conservation Area. Surrounding development consists of retail to the north and west and residential dwellings, in the form of detached and semi-detached buildings, to the south and east although Wokingham Fire Station and a Council car park adjoin to the south east.

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.

Sustainability

6. Policies CP1 and CP6 of the Core Strategy require that development be sustainable with a reduction in the need for travel and the promotion of sustainable transport and Policy CP9 states that the scale of development must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities, services and accessibility at or in the location.
7. The site is within Wokingham Town Centre and is in immediate proximity of a variety of retail and leisure facilities and services. It is also served by several bus services and it is within walking distance of Wokingham Railway Station. It is acceptable in terms of being sustainably located and in accordance with the principles in the Core Strategy.

Change in use classes

8. Policy CP13 of the Core Strategy requires the protection of retail centres, with paragraph 4.67 aiming to maintain the range of activities so that they are at the heart of sustainable communities. Proposals leading to the loss of town centre

uses will not be allowed unless it is substantiated that there is no deficiency in the catchment. Paragraph 4.62 identifies town centre uses as 'retailing, entertainment, arts and culture, indoor recreation, leisure, health, community and office uses. This includes many of the uses in the existing building.

9. Policy CP14 of the Core Strategy sets out actions for the growth and renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre. This includes ensuring development cumulatively provides and maintains offices, housing, leisure and entertainment, and other specified uses.
10. Policy CP15 of the Core Strategy indicates that development should be of a scale and form that is compatible with the retail character of the centre and its role in the hierarchy of retail centres, that it contributes to the provision of day and evening/night-time uses and is compatible with other uses and enhances vitality and viability. There should not be any overall net loss of Class B floorspace.
11. The existing building was originally used as Class D2 cinema but the uses have changed over time such that it is understood that it currently lawfully comprises the following uses:
 - 130m² of Class A1 and A5 retail space in two units to Easthampstead Road
 - 225m² of Class B1 office space on the first and second floor
 - 135m² of Class C3 residential (3 bedsit units) on the second floor
 - 525m² of Class D1 gymnasium space at the rear of the first floor
 - 680m² of Class D2 hall space within the main cinema space (bingo hall)
 - Some other floorspace is unspecified
12. The demolition of the building will result in a minor loss of Class A retail floorspace and a more sizeable loss of Class B1, D1 and D2 floorspace, which is broadly contrary to policy guidance in Policies CP13-CP15.
13. The subject site is not within a primary or secondary retail frontage and is located on the edge of the retail centre, with residential development opposite and further east along Easthampstead Road. As such, the site and its frontage plays a lesser role in the town centre, with lower foot traffic passing the site. It is also a retrofitted building that is not entirely fit for the respective purposes, including that it is setback from the street within an unappealing street frontage. On these grounds, the loss of the modest amount of existing Class A retail floorspace is not opposed.
14. The main core of the building was converted to a bingo hall (within the same Class D2 use as the cinema) in 1977 and eventually expanded to assume the entire cinema floorspace. It ceased trading about 2012. It was privately operated and would not have fallen within the definition of a community facility in the MDD Local Plan as comprising health (including preventative social care and community support services), education, play and leisure or culture together with libraries, village/community halls, religious buildings and burial sites. The loss of this floorspace is therefore reasonable, not least because it has remained vacant for a prolonged period of time.
15. The loss of office space is contrary to Policy CP14(4)(c), which does seek to maintain Class B office accommodation within the Wokingham Town Centre.

Policy CP15 also has a qualitative requirement for provision within the borough of employment floorspace of different sizes, types, quality and location.

16. The site is outside any Core Employment Area, as defined in Policy CP15, and as such does offer an alternative location for employment land within the borough. While the principle of seeking to maintain a variety of employment floorspace provision is an important consideration, it is noted that the site is located close to the Core Employment Area of Molly Millars Industrial Estate and therefore there is a large amount of employment floorspace a short distance away that is still relatively accessible to the town centre, albeit not within the town centre designation. The applicant was invited to include office floorspace to the rear of the ground floor facing onto Denton Road. This was declined, primarily on the grounds of viability but this on its own remains an insufficient reason to refuse the application on this basis.
17. The gymnasium is also classed as Class D1 floorspace. It is still trading and the loss of this floorspace would be contrary to Paragraph 4.62 of the Core Strategy in that it involves the loss of a town centre use. However, it is not envisaged that there is a deficiency in the catchment and there is no strict departure from policy.
18. The cumulative loss of non-residential floorspace requires consideration of (a) whether it will impact the range of activities in the town centre and (b) whether it would impact upon the quantum and range of employment floorspace across the borough.
19. In relation to the first question, it is recognised that there is the total loss of the available Class A5, B1, D1 and D2 floorspace within the town centre. However, its replacement with 1350m² of residential floorspace in the form of 22 units is supported by Policy CP14 and Sections 3.4.18 and 10.6.1 of the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD, which recognise that additional residential accommodation in the Wokingham Town Centre is desirable in terms of ensuring an 18 hour economy. It is more generally offset by higher quality and more appropriately located retail and office developments at Peach Place and Elms Field, which are currently adding to the quality of floorspace in the town centre.
20. Moving to the second question, the proposal would lead to a modest loss of employment floorspace as defined by policy CP15 when measured across the borough. Moreover, it is a retrofitted space within a 1930s building originally designed as a cinema and as such, it is not purpose built and it does not have an extended lifespan for its current purpose.
21. The Central FEMA (Functional Economic Market Area) Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) report (October 2016) identifies a recommended net office space requirement for 2013-2036 of at least 93,305m² based on the labour supply approach and this suggests the need to retain existing floorspace. This study has not factored in the allocated Science Park south of the M4 which is expected to deliver significant amounts of employment floorspace up to and beyond the current plan period which would make the relatively modest loss in this case more acceptable. On this point, the extent of office floorspace that is lost is almost negligible.

22. The previous application for the site (181723) was refused, in part, because there was *'a loss of available office/commercial employment space and no marketing or viability evidence has been provided in support of the application. This is contrary to Policy CP13, CP14 and CP15 of the Core Strategy 2010.'*
23. This application is supported by the same profit and loss report indicating that there has been a commercial loss of £200,000 over the past five years or £60,000 in the past year. The Design and Access Statement offers no new information. Such information that would have been expected with any resubmission could include marketing details. Indeed, some of the offices and gymnasium remain occupied today.
24. However, a review of the application is such that greater weight should be applied to the poor quality and design of the existing building, which is not entirely fit for its intended purposes and the significance of additional residential accommodation in this location. There is no reason to dispute the financial figures supplied and the agent has indicated that the lack of real estate marketing is because it has not been marketed. The bingo hall has a very limited market and it is not unsurprising that it has remained vacant for seven years. It has been 17 months since the submission of the previous refused application.
25. Given the unappealing appearance and state of the existing building, the most appropriate solution for the site is for the complete redevelopment of the site and the provision of residential accommodation is not unreasonable given that there is additional retail and office floorspace elsewhere in the town centre that has recently come on the market and additional residential floorspace is viewed as supporting the 18 hour economy. In this respect and upon consideration of the wider balance, there are no objections in relation to the provision of additional residential accommodation and the loss of Class B1, D1 and D2 floorspace in this location. This view is not opposed by Growth and Delivery.

Housing Land Supply

26. The most up-to-date Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement demonstrates the Council has a 5 year housing land supply. At 31 March 2019, the deliverable land supply was 6.39 years against the housing need of 804 additional homes per annum plus a 5% additional buffer. The proposal will assist in delivering and boosting this housing need in a managed way and in a highly appropriate location.

Character of the Area

Built form

27. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high quality design. This is reinforced in other policies in the Borough Design Guide SPD, including R1, which requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area and R11, which requires a coherent street character in terms of scale, rhythm, proportion and height.

28. With an inconsistent building line to the front, dominance imposed by the blank façade at the rear, existing advertising to the front elevation, use of bland materials, significant height and varied and complex roof form, the existing building contributes little in terms of compatibility with the character of the area.
29. The officer report for the previous refused application noted that the replacement dwelling was creating a more cohesive presentation to the front and rear boundaries, with a more consistent building, greater activation and consistency in roof form. However, it also presented significance dominance upon the conservation area, excessive height and additional volume to the front and rear with no recessiveness on the upper levels.
30. The design has evolved several times since the refusal of the previous application. It includes a lowering of the building height at the front and rear, reduction in the bulk to the sides of the building, the incorporation of two gables to the Easthampstead Road frontage with a sloping roof between, indenting of the front elevation into two separate articulated facades and other modest design changes.
31. The conclusion is that the scheme represents a suitable fit for the slightly irregular configuration of the site and the edge of town centre location. The dual gables to Easthampstead Road create a consistency in building form that reflects the characteristics of the two buildings on either side, the dwellings at 8-14 Easthampstead Road on the opposite side of the road and the corner building at the intersection with Peach Street. The only exception is the listed buildings at 3-5 Easthampstead Road and the Victoria Arms pub but this building has its own distinctive and historic relationship to the street that is not worthy of replication.
32. It is up to four storeys in height but appears as three storeys at Easthampstead Road. Even then, the two gables allow for a prominent appearance to the building that is offset by the sloping roof between. There is a side dormer to the south eastern elevation but none to the opposite side elevation. This would ordinarily result in a perception of lop-sidedness but given the limited views of the north western side elevation and because it would not be appreciated in views of the front elevation, no issue is raised. On the lower levels, there is a good degree of articulation and activation, with a combination of planters, a glazed Juliette balcony and the 1.0m stepping of the building at its centre, which breaks up what would otherwise be an excessively wide blank frontage and achieves a building width that is broadly consistent with most other buildings on this side of the road. The lower height at the rear of the site also allows for a more cohesiveness relationship and a more perceptible transition to the reduced built form in Denton Road.
33. The form of the fourth storey is slightly unusual in terms of architectural appearance, with a projecting flat roof and a 40 degree sloping roof to the side as well as an additional stairwell overrun forward of the fourth floor that is off centre in elevation form. However, as is explained below, it is well setback and would only be viewed from the south east, where it is not unreasonably high.
34. The overall built form is a suitable fit for the site when considering its visibility in the streetscene. When accounting for the design changes to the building that have been made since the refusal, concerns of excessive built form are no longer pressed.

Density

35. Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan require an appropriate dwelling density and R10 of the Borough Design Guide SPD seeks to ensure that the development achieves an appropriate density in relation to local character.
36. The density of the development is equivalent to 172 dwellings per hectare, which is a significant reduction from the 211 dwellings per hectare that formed part of the basis for the previous refusal of the application. It now represents a more measured density when accounting for the site location on the edge of the Wokingham Town Centre and in terms of the relationship with the terraced residences on the opposite side of Easthampstead Road and the detached dwellings to the rear. The height is appropriate and the overall form and the internal living standards are now acceptable, which is indicative of an appropriate design. This is generally in accordance with paragraphs 106 and 123 of the NPPF, which seeks to achieve an uplift and optimisation of density of development in town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport.
37. The Design and Access Statement refers to the Saxon Court development on Peach Street (planning reference F/2014/1317) and it is apparent that the proposed development has taken account of this development in justifying its height and form. The density at Saxon Court was 188 dwellings per hectare, which is more than the proposed scheme.

Building line

38. R7 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires a consistent building line relative to existing buildings. The existing building has a 10m setback to the front boundary and a stepped setback to the rear boundary that is generally close to nil. The replacement building will result in a 2.7-4.4m setback to the front boundary, which is a significant improvement to the refused scheme.
39. The front building line is consistent with the established line between the existing listed buildings to the west and the Fire Station to the west. It sits behind the building to the north west by 1.4m and is stepped back 1.0m in the centre of the building where it aligns with the Fire Station to the south east. The articulation of the building and conforming front setback results in a consistency in building line.
40. To the rear, the building line is consistent with the siting of the existing building and would not be out of alignment given there is reduced built form in Denton Road in an area of increased openness with the Fire Station carpark and the carpark beyond. Where there were previously concerns with the imposing bulk of the building, the design now incorporates a varied building line and reduced bulk on the levels above, such that there is no longer any adverse impact.
41. The existing building has nil side setbacks when viewed from the rear but appears much more open in form from Easthampstead Road. The Fire Station to the east is setback from the side boundary, enabling an open and detached appearance. The established listed buildings to the west are generally built to the boundary but they are of lesser height and scale. The replacement building will have nil setbacks to the side boundary when viewed from the front and rear but this is

limited to the ground level and in areas, it is setback in behind the front building. This allows for a continued appreciation of a detached building consistent with other buildings on this side of the street. Where this was raised in the previous refusal, it is no longer an issue and the proposal is acceptable.

Height

42. R9 and NR5 of the Borough Design Guide SPD note that height, bulk and massing should respond to the local context and the prevailing heights in the area. Section 9.4 of the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD notes that building heights in the town centre are consistently two and three storey and there is a strong consistency of street enclosure. The master plan seeks to reinforce this consistency as an important element of the town centre's character. It is therefore not envisaged that new development should exceed three storeys.



Proposed front elevation to Easthampstead Road



Proposed rear elevation to Denton Road

43. The proposal includes three distinct storeys with a fourth floor set back from the front and rear frontages. To Easthampstead Road, the eaves measure 6.7m and the main ridge of the gables (at the third floor) measure 10.3m. This is higher than the Chinese take away to the north east but generally consistent with the height of the Fire Station building. It has the impression of 2.5 storeys in height to the rear in Denton Road, with the third floor located within a higher than normal roof space. In this case, the eaves measure 5.3m and the ridge measures 8.6m, both of which are appropriate for the surrounding context.
44. Setback from the front elevation, the stairwell overrun adds an additional 1.0m in height above the ridge of the front gables but is very limited in volume and does not present as any real building form given it sits well behind the front ridgeline. Centred within the site, the fourth floor penthouse is 1.0m higher still (for a total overall building height of 12.3m). However, it is setback 11-12m from the front elevation and at least 23m from the rear where it is not readily apparent in views from either road. It would be visible from the south east on Easthampstead Road

over the roof of the Fire Station. Even then, though, it is modest in its scale with the sloping roof minimising the bulk and because it occupies 33% of the building depth (17.5m length of 53m) and as such, it is not an unreasonable element to the building.

45. The streetscenes of Easthampstead Road and Denton Road are best described as predominated by two storey development. However, an office building to north west of the site has an equivalent four storey height and this gives a degree of context for the surrounding built form of the town centre. The three storey apparent height and four storey actual height does not depart from this height by any significance and the proposal represents a suitable outcome for the edge of town centre location.

Building design

46. R13 of the Borough Design Guide SPD states that residential development should address public open space, NR3 requires a positive arrival impression and NR4 requires that buildings address the street.
47. The original design of the building raised concern with the residential entrances from Easthampstead Road, which were confined to the edges of the building and created an inconspicuous presence that did not promote residential activation or establish an inviting impression within the street. Rear pedestrian access via South Place took the form of a fire stairwell door opening onto the South Place pedestrian thoroughfare and via the rear vehicular access, which was much less inviting.
48. The revisions include minor changes to the appearance of the front entrance but the retention of the width and location of the entrance. It is more visible in its presentation and the provision of two dwellings to the streetfront creates a more inviting façade. However, the more significant change is to the rear. Because it is felt that a large proportion of residents and visitors on foot will access the site from South Place (which links with Peach Street), a much more inviting entrance and lobby has been established in this location such that the initial streetscape concerns are no longer raised.
49. Figure 12 of the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD recognises that the rear elevation is a dead frontage. In this respect, activation of this space by establishing three residential units is seen as a positive outcome. This is now two units but the design includes added setbacks, articulation, porch areas and opportunities for landscaping, such that any initial concerns are resolved.
50. The building continues to employ an external covered walkway for access to the units. There is not overwhelming support for this approach in design terms but it does allow for the units to have an outlook onto the communal open space and it minimises building bulk. Such an approach has been used at the Saxon Court building and given that the proposal does not expressly conflict with any of the design guidelines in the Borough Design Guide SPD, no objection is raised.
51. R11 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that housing ensure a coherent street character, including materials and colour and NR8 requires high quality and simple materials and components. Section 5.5 of the Wokingham Town Centre

Masterplan SPD expands on this by stating that new development in the town centre should achieve the highest quality of architecture, urban design and environmentally responsible design to protect and enhance the quality and character of the town centre.

52. As previously designed and refused, the building employed a contrast of building materials, forms and colours to all four elevations. Brick was used at the ground level with timber cladding in the projecting bay windows, which included triangular bay windows at the rear elevation. Circular windows were used to the staircase and colours varied between brown, grey, yellow, green and pink. Whilst the Masterplan aims to encourage innovation in urban design, it was felt that the building materials and colours were unsuitable for the conservation area.
53. These elements have been reduced or minimised in areas, such as a reduction in the prominence in the rear facing bay windows. A better (and varied) collection of design solutions have also been employed to the Easthampstead Road frontage, with highlight windows, a glazed Juliette balcony, planter beds and contrasting materials between the two gable windows and front entrances to the ground floor units. It is also understood that the use of materials has been softened. A glazed lift is supported.
54. R12 of the Borough Design Guide states that boundary treatments contribute positively to the character of the area. At street level, a low brick fence is proposed, which will complement the style and height of fencing within residential properties opposite and will maintain the openness of the streetscene.
55. P2 of the Borough Design Guide SPD ensures that parking is provided in a manner that is compatible with the local character. There are no concerns with the car parking arrangement and its impression on the streetscene.
56. On the basis of the above comments, the concerns of the original refusal are no longer maintained and the proposed materials and colours are acceptable. However, it remains subject to the submission of further details in Condition 11 to ensure that there is compatibility with the town centre and conservation area.

Heritage

Wokingham Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

57. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that development must ensure the preservation of any nearby listed building, including its setting, Paragraph 193-196 of the NPPF requires consideration of the harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset and Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan requires the conservation and enhancement of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, including their views and setting.
58. Policy CP14 of the Core Strategy seeks to reinforce the historic market town character of Wokingham, including conserving and enhancing historic quality and interest and enhanced design quality.
59. Section 9.2.2 of the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD states that development should protect and enhance the character, appearance, setting and

historic plan form of the town centre, achieve a high standard of design and safeguard important views.

60. The site lies on the south eastern edge of the Wokingham Conservation Area and is also immediately adjacent to the Grade II listed 3-5 Easthampstead Road and Victoria Arms Public House.
61. The site is occupied by a much altered former cinema building, dating from the late 1930s. This existing building takes up almost the entire site, the main bulk of the building, the former auditorium, lying behind the buildings fronting Peach Street. This former Ritz Cinema is known to have been designed by a noted cinema architect Eric Norman Bailey of Maidenhead and when originally opened in 1937 had a distinctive foray entrance feature to it the modernist style of that time.
62. Whilst the main auditorium portion of the former cinema appears little changed externally, the distinctive original foray entrance has been replaced by a more substantial two storey raking structure. This newer Easthampstead Road frontage structure, which appears to be of a 1980s date, does not contribute in any positive manner to the character and appearance of the conservation area. However its raked formed and set back location from the road does mean that this structure is not in important views looking south from the Peach Street junction.
63. Concerns that there may be original features in the 'art deco cinema' that are worthy of retention formed reason for refusal 6 in the original refusal. Despite suggestions that further studies have been undertaken and that no original features remain, the only documentation submitted with this application stated "*the site contains no heritage assets (the shell of the former cinema is of no significance architectural merit and its tower long gone).*" However, it is acknowledged that any such features would most likely not prevent the demolition of the building and could instead be retained within the replacement building. In the continued absence of information but because the application is otherwise acceptable on other grounds, the concerns raised in reason for refusal 6 now form a pre demolition condition at Condition 3.
64. The Conservation Officer raised concern with the building as originally proposed in 181723 because the '*bulk, height and massing of the replacement building would result in adverse harm to the Easthampstead Road street scene in an area where the conservation area is characterised by two storey buildings of red brick or render with clay tiled or slate covered roofs and of traditional form, dating from the C18th to early C 20th...the harm to these designated heritage assets is considered to be less than substantial in NPPF terms, but nevertheless requiring clear and convincing justification, which has not been provided.*'
65. More particularly, it noted that '*The replacement building is built to four storeys with a crown roof containing the upper floor accommodation. It is also brought closer to the property frontage on Easthampstead Road (beyond the fire station) and occupies its full width. Despite the use of projecting window bays and gables, there is a lack of articulation, resulting in the height, bulk and massing of the building asserting itself on the street, dominating views in both directions and detracting from the view of the listed building.*'

66. The Council's Conservation Officer found the subject application, as originally proposed, to be unacceptable for similar reasons. There is still a very limited amount of justification for the proposal and it was still felt the '*height and forward setting of this Easthampstead Road element makes it overly prominent in views looking back along Easthampstead Road from its junction with Peach Street, with the roof form of the proposal believed likely to be seen above the roofs of the listed properties between it and Peach Street.*'
67. As previously noted, revised plans have been provided and this has allowed for less building bulk in the roof form, a breaking up of the width of the building and a reduction in the perception of the building asserting itself on the street – thereby addressing concerns that were originally raised in 181723. Consequently, the building sits more appropriately in the streetscene and the Wokingham Conservation Area and the visibility of the dwelling from the adjacent listed buildings is reduced. The original concerns are resolved and the setting is preserved and enhanced in accordance with the NPPF, Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD.
68. The harm is less than substantial and it is questionable about whether the clear and convincing justification has been provided but the proposal is nonetheless acceptable.

Archaeology

69. Policy TB25 of the MDD Local Plan requires the retention of archaeological sites in situ. The site is with an Area of High Archaeological Potential due to its proximity to the medieval historic core of the town.
70. The application, including an archaeological desk-based assessment prepared by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, dated December 2018 was referred to Berkshire Archaeology for consultation (the absence of this document previously formed reason for refusal 13). Easthampstead Road was one of the medieval routes heading south from the town but no medieval remains have so far been found within the site or immediately adjacent. The Historic Environment Record (HER) suggests that a Palaeolithic hand axe was discovered within the site but there is doubt that this is correct and the provenance of this find is unclear. Development of the site dates from the 18th century and the desk-based assessment concludes that the site has some archaeological potential, despite the construction of a major cinema building within it. The report recommends an archaeological watching brief as an appropriate mitigation measure.
71. Berkshire Archaeology is comfortable with the assessment and agrees with the recommendation of a watching brief during construction as an appropriate response. This is detailed in Condition 12.

Unit Mix

72. Policy CP5 of the CS and Policy TB05 of the MDD require an appropriate dwelling type and tenure for affordable housing schemes. It is also referred to in the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD, which seeks 1 and 2 bedroom units at 47%, 3 bedroom units at 32% and 4+ bedroom units at 21%.

73. The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (February 2016) identified future housing need for the Wokingham Borough. Table 107 (on page 295) identifies the following:

No of beds	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
SHMA	934	3488	5605	2862	12889
	7.2%	27.1%	43.5%	22.2%	100%
Previous refusal	6 units	21 units	0 units	0 units	27 units
	22%	78%	0%	0%	100%
Subject application	6 units	14 units	2 units	0 units	22 units
	27%	63%	10%	0%	100%

74. The intent of Council's policies are to provide a mix of accommodation to cater for the varied needs of the community and to ensure that it is provided where it is needed. It must take account of a variety of living arrangements including but not limited to families, extended families, couples, single parents, first home owners, aged residents (including those looking to downsize) and those on low income. Provision of affordable housing is also paramount.
75. The previous application was refused on the grounds that the unit mix was unacceptable. This has been improved in the subject application, with a total reduction in the number of units and some additional studios and 3-bedroom units. There remains a departure from policy and from the identified need. However, on balance, when accounting for its accessible and sustainable location and full provision of affordable housing, there is sufficient justification for the refusal of the application based on this departure. On this basis, reason for refusal 8 is no longer raised.

Accessible Housing

76. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities, including for aged persons, children and the disabled. 10–20% of all dwellings should be to Lifetime Homes standards in accordance with Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan. In this case, it equates to 3-6 units.
77. Although the Lifetime Homes standard has been replaced by the new national technical housing standards, the need to design and build accessible and adaptable accommodation remains integral to future neighbourhood planning.
78. The passenger lift allows for level access from the ground floor carpark and from Denton Road at the rear and Easthampstead Road at the front to each level of the building. Flats 1, 2 and 10 are listed as accessible and the dimensions within and access to these units is favourable for achieving these outcomes. In total, all but the five units at the front of the building will be afforded level access and the open plan form makes the dwellings largely accessible. There are also three disabled parking spaces within the ground floor carpark. As such, three accessible units and car spaces represents 14% of the total development, which is an acceptable outcome.

Housing Amenity

Internal Amenity

79. Policy TB07 of the MDD Local Plan and R17 of the Borough Design Guide SPD require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity. In accordance with the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard, a minimum standard of 39m² applies for a studio, 50m² for 1-bedroom units, 61m² for 2-bedroom units and 74-96m² for 3-bedroom units.
80. Additionally, main bedrooms should have a minimum area of 12m², secondary bedrooms should have a minimum area of 7.5m², living spaces a minimum area of 23-25m² and there should be provision for storage.
81. There is broad conformity with the above standards throughout the development, with the following exceptions as illustrated by the shaded areas in the following table:

Unit	Beds/ Occ.	Floor Area	Bed 1	Bed 2	Living	Aspect	Storage
Standard		39-86m ²	11.5m ²	7.5m ²	23-27m ²	Dual	Provided
1	Studio	45m ²	N/A	N/A	27m ²	Single	Provided
2	3b/4o	76m ²	13.5m ²	9.0m ²	27m ²	Single	Provided
3	1b/2o	48m ²	12m ²	N/A	25m ²	Single	Provided
4	2b/3o	64m ²	13m ²	11m ²	22m ²	Dual	Provided
5	2b/3o	63m ²	12m ²	8m ²	27m ²	Dual	Provided
6	2b/3o	64m ²	15m ²	8m ²	24m ²	Dual	Provided
7	2b/3o	64m ²	15m ²	8m ²	24m ²	Dual	Provided
8	2b/3o	63m ²	12m ²	10m ²	25m ²	Dual	Provided
9	2b/3o	62.5m ²	12.5m ²	9m ²	25m ²	Dual	Provided
10	1b/2o	52m ²	13m ²	N/A	26m ²	Dual	Provided
11	2b/3o	66m ²	12m ²	11m ²	25m ²	Dual	Provided
12	2b/3o	65m ²	12m ²	11m ²	23m ²	Dual	Provided
13	2b/3o	63m ²	15m ²	8m ²	22m ²	Dual	Provided
14	2b/3o	66m ²	12m ²	11m ²	27m ²	Dual	Provided
15	2b/3o	66m ²	12m ²	11m ²	27m ²	Dual	Provided
16	2b/3o	63m ²	12m ²	10m ²	25m ²	Dual	Provided
17	2b/3o	62.5m ²	12.5m ²	9m ²	25m ²	Dual	Provided
18	1b/2o	52m ²	13m ²	N/A	26m ²	Dual	Provided
19	2b/3o	66m ²	12m ²	11m ²	25m ²	Dual	Provided
20	1b/2o	62m ²	15m ²	N/A	25m ²	Dual	Provided
21	1b/2o	54m ²	17m ²	N/A	31m ²	Dual	Provided
22	3b/4o	108m ²	11.5m ²	10m ²	55m ²	Dual	Provided

82. In the previous scheme, the majority of the units were not afforded adequate internal amenity space (amongst other factors) and the view was taken that this was indicative of an overdevelopment of the site.
83. By reducing the scale of the development and the number of units from 27 to 22, the above concerns are resolved and where there are departures, they are fewer in number, less pronounced and less significant. Unit 3 has a departure of 2m² from the minimum unit size but the departure is minor in nature and there is separate private amenity space in the form of a front courtyard and the bedroom size and living room sizes are acceptable.
84. The remaining departures are within the open plan living room of five other units, where the departure relates to an SPD guideline only and the extent of non-

compliance is between 1m² and 2m². The internal amenity of these spaces is not compromised in any noticeable way and coupled with the improvement in the amount and quality of outdoor amenity space, the concerns raised in reason for refusal 2 of the previous scheme are no longer pressed and the proposal is acceptable on internal amenity grounds.

85. R18 of the Borough Design Guide SPD also requires sufficient sunlight and daylight to new properties, with dwellings afforded a reasonable dual outlook and southern aspect. Because of the internal communal courtyard and balcony access, the vast majority of the units (86%) are dual aspect and this is a good outcome on amenity grounds, as it allows for cross ventilation and multiple outlooks. Those units that are single aspect are confined to the ground floor where there access to sunlight and a good street level outlook and/or private amenity space.
86. 100% of the units have access to sunlight, with units fronting Easthampstead Road receiving morning sunlight, units to Denton Road receiving afternoon sunlight and 12 units (or 55% of the development) likely to receive sunlight along the southern elevation through most of the day. On the basis of the above, no objection is raised.

External Amenity

87. R16 of the Borough Design Guide SPD stipulates that each unit should have amenity space and be able to accommodate 2–4 chairs and a small table.
88. Three of the units are afforded private amenity space with front courtyards to Units 3 and 4 at the front of the ground floor and a roof terrace for the penthouse unit (Unit 22) on the third floor. They are acceptable in terms of R16. The remaining units will rely upon a communal open space area at first floor level measuring 278m², which includes a feature, lawn, seating and landscaping. It will be supplemented by a third floor roof terrace measuring 44m².
89. The previous refusal raised concern with the heavy reliance upon communal amenity space, particularly given there were shortfalls in the internal floorspace of most of the units. There were also concerns surrounding the limitations posed by the minimal soil depth and the shadowing caused by a four storey building to the south. The communal floor space was the equivalent of 10.3m² per unit.
90. The subject application proposes 17m² per unit and the design also includes a lowering of the height of the building at the rear by 3.0m so that increased light is provided. The provision of a fourth floor roof terrace is also an appropriate design solution as this space will be afforded direct sunlight through the day.
91. The revised plan includes a 1.25m balustrade around the edge of the first floor communal space that will allow for some acoustic and visual separation to the units such that there would be an adequate level of amenity for the occupants. In doing so, the level of external amenity is acceptable. The initial design includes a mix of surfaces and plantings and further details are required by Condition 4.

Acoustic Amenity

92. Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact.
93. In the majority of cases, the units are stacked appropriately, with bedrooms and kitchens within one unit located above other bedrooms and kitchens in another unit. However, in several cases, the kitchens or living rooms of one unit are located alongside bedrooms within the adjacent unit. This would rely upon acoustic specifications rather than adopting simple design solutions. Similar concerns are raised in relation to the ground floor where Units 1 and 2 at the rear being sited between the roadway and the carpark.
94. Whilst it was raised as a reason for refusal in the previous application, it is acknowledged that the proposal is for a new build, that the proposal will need to meet building regulations and there are no longer any other internal amenity concerns. As such, the issue in Reason for Refusal 2 is no longer pressed. However, it remains subject to Condition 17 requiring acoustic separation details.
95. Irrespective of the above, the site occupies a town centre location and there is an increased expectation and acceptance of noise from road traffic and from general town centre activity, including the Fire Station and pub which adjoin the subject site on either side. On this basis, subject to the aforementioned details, no objection is raised.

Pollution

96. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy aims to ensure that development avoids areas where pollution (including noise) may impact upon the amenity of future occupiers. There are six units fronting onto Easthamptead Road, which has relatively high levels of traffic movements and can, at times, include idling cars at the intersection with Peach Street. However, the levels of air pollution are not identified as an Air Quality Management Areas and even then, the setback of the building from the street is sufficient to adequately protect against any adverse impacts.

Residential Amenities

97. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity. Surrounding the site are residential dwellings to the front and rear with offices to the north western side and the Wokingham Fire Station to the south east.

Overlooking

98. R15 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires the retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms, with separation of 10m-15m between properties across Easthamptead Road and Denton Road, depending upon the height of the window. There should also generally be 30m rear to rear separation between the second and third floors of the development and houses to the rear.
99. A degree of overlooking could be acceptable on account of its location on the edge of the town centre and when accounting for the scale of the existing building. With this preface, the following observations are noted:

- There are no concerns of overlooking between units within the development itself. Of note, the rear first floor bay windows includes obscure glazing to Unit 7, which will eliminate views towards Unit 6 and this is reinforced in Condition 27
- There is generally not more than 16m separation to the side elevation of 12 Denton Road and 18m to 15A Denton Road, these being the two closest residential properties at the rear. Within the ground and first floor levels, this satisfies the minimum requirements for a rear to side arrangement and privacy screening is employed within the bay window to Unit 7 and the Juliette balcony of Unit 5, such that no objection is raised (subject to Condition 27). At second floor level, the windows are rooflights at a minimum sill height of 1.35m. On balance, it is acceptable given the angle of the rooflight will generally give an upwards outlook rather than downwards towards the property opposite
- There is a minimum of 15.1m separation across the front boundary to 16-24 Easthampstead Road, where 15m is required. As such, the level of privacy is adequate.
- With the building being concentrated on the eastern side of the site, the separation distances to the office buildings to the west are generally 22m or more from the units and 15m from the glazed lift. Given the residential to non-residential relationship and the level of separation, no objection is raised. The fencing around the perimeter of the communal open space includes a 1.7m high screen, with a separation distance of 7m between the edge of the open space and windows within the office building opposite. Accordingly, privacy is maintained although it is conditioned to be obscure glazed in Condition 27 and comprise of a green wall in Condition 4. Condition 4 also requires details of soil depth to ensure that any raising of the level does not result in any non-complaint 1.7m height
- To the east, the separation distances are not more than 3m and there are dormitory windows within the upper levels of the Fire Station. However, the habitable windows on the first floor are adequately offset from the windows within the Fire Station or some of the windows in the proposed building have a 1.7m sill height and where there is a degree of overlooking, it could be concluded as mutual overlooking within a residential to non-residential relationship in an area where some overlooking would be expected in a town centre location. On this basis, it is not sufficient to warrant refusal of the application
- The two third floor roof terraces (one private, one communal) is screened around its edges by a 1.5m screen and 1.7m hedging (which is subject to further details in Condition 4). It will adequately limit downward sightlines and reduce any outlook from these spaces such that no objection is raised.

100. On the basis of the above, no objection is raised on overlooking grounds.

Sunlight and Daylight

101. R18 of the Borough Design Guide SPD aims to protect sunlight and daylight to existing properties, with no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties. Habitable windows of adjoining properties must not be obstructed by a 25 degree angle.

102. A BRE sunlight assessment was submitted with the planning application. It indicated that the residential properties at 18-24 Easthampstead Road and 12 and 15A Denton Road will fall within the 25 degree line imposed by the existing building, which is contrary to R18. The replacement building results in additional impact to these windows but in terms of the provision of Vertical Sky Component, the degree of additional impact is within the allowable impact in BRE guidance. Similar impacts occur to the office buildings and retail premises to the west and east.
103. The previous refusal of 181723 accepted this conclusion but raised concerns with the height of the building and the unnecessary impact upon 18-24 Easthampstead Road and 12 and 15A Denton Road, including additional overshadowing of the front living rooms of 18-24 Easthampstead Road. The bulk has been reduced at both ends of the building and on this basis, no further objection is raised.

Overbearing and Sense of Enclosure

104. R16 of the Borough Design Guide SPD generally requires separation distances of 1.0m to the side boundaries and R15 separation distances of 10m-15m between properties across Easthampstead Road and 10m-30m to the rear.
105. The existing building is detached in form and retains a degree of building separation to the side boundaries. The bulk of the replacement building will be concentrated on the eastern side boundary adjacent to the Fire Station building and office building at the rear. There is no perceived dominance upon this plot given the non-residential use and the corresponding elevations and relationship of the buildings on the adjoining properties.
106. Similarly, through the adequate separation, its town centre location, built form of neighbouring buildings (which are non-residential), there is no concerns of dominance to the west either. The site benefits from the existing access road on its south western side and the car park of the neighbouring property on its north western side. It will extend to the boundary with the Shanghai Chinese take away at 7 Easthampstead Road but even then, it is limited to the ground floor only, with a minimum setback of 1.7m-2.1m on the levels above. Where there is a nil setback at ground level, there is no harm posed because it adjoins a shed and there is a nil setback on the neighbouring property and the ground floor use is non-residential.
107. There is a two storey plus loft height to Denton Road at the rear, which is an entirely appropriate transition in built form of the one and two storey detached residential dwellings to the rear. To Easthampstead Road, it comprises three storeys in height, in the form of two projecting gables. But through the incorporation of an indented setback from the street, separation of approximately 15m and the introduction of a gable presentation in the revised plans, there is no unreasonable impression of bulk or dominance upon neighbouring residents.
108. Overall, the level of building separation is adequate when acknowledging its town centre location but also recognising its edge of centre location. On this basis, no objection is raised.

Noise

109. Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact.
110. The building is located within the Wokingham Town Centre and there will be a degree of noise from road traffic and surrounding non-residential uses. Given its location within the town centre, there is an expectation that there will be some noise disturbance that is acceptable in the circumstances and in this case, there are no in-principle concerns with any likely impact upon the acoustic privacy of surrounding residents and there is insufficient justification to refuse the application on these grounds.
111. The proposal includes two communal terrace areas – on the first floor and on the third floor, as well as a separate private open space area. The level of noise emanating from these spaces is not considered to be unreasonable. The landscaped communal open space on the first floor is concentrated to face towards the west away from residential properties and is shielded on its remaining elevations. The roof terrace is a smaller 44m² area and less accessible and likely to result in lower usage because it is removed from the units on the levels below. Even then, it is screened on all sides. Likewise, the private roof terrace for Unit 22 is smaller still (33m²) and for exclusive private use of the unit. Likely noise levels will be manageable.
112. Notwithstanding, the Council's Environmental Health Officer has requested acoustic details, including a noise survey and scheme of works, to ensure that there are no undue impacts. This is detailed in Condition 17.

Highway Access and Parking Provision

Car Parking

113. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street parking standards, including provision for charging facilities. Parking spaces should also be a minimum of 5m x 2.5m. There is a requirement for 22 resident car spaces in addition to nine unallocated/visitor parking spaces for a total of 31 car spaces.
114. The proposal makes provision for a total of 23 car spaces of compliant length and width in a ground floor car park, three of which are assigned for disabled parking and one for visitor/deliveries/services. Of the 22 resident spaces, they will be allocated to specific units, which is a ratio of one space per unit. As such, the proposal therefore represents a departure of eight spaces.
115. Section 7.4.6 of the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD states that '*future developments within the town centre must seek to materially reduce car parking provision and contribute to enhanced parking management and sustainable transport improvements that offer comparative door-to-door journey times.*' The intent behind this approach is recognising the accessible location of the site in amongst other facilities and services and within easy walking distance of bus services and Wokingham Train Station. There are also several nearby car parks.
116. The Parking Standards Study Report (2011) also acknowledges that 35% of occupants within flats do not own a car and the town centre site location is highly

sustainable. Furthermore, F/2014/1317 at Saxon Court in Peach Street (80m to the north of the subject site) granted approval for a 39 residential unit development (8 x 1-bed and 31 x 2-bed) with 36 spaces (at 0.92 spaces per unit).

117. The previous application proposed a rate of 0.88 spaces per unit, which was marginally less than the approval at Saxon Court and the application was refused on this basis. This has been increased to at least one space per unit, and it is also supplemented with three motorcycle spaces.
118. As such, the Council's Highways Officer raises no objection, on the grounds that it is in a highly sustainable town centre location and surrounding car parks and on street parking could account for the lack of visitor parking.
119. Spaces 1-5 include electric charging points, which is a rate of 20%. This approach is supported, with anticipated demand for electric charging in the future. Condition 8 requires details of connections as part of a wider Car Park Management Plan and will seek to retain such facilities for the lifetime of the development.

Servicing

120. TB20 of the MDD Local Plan indicates that servicing should ensure that there is no harmful or adverse impact on the neighbour amenity, highway safety, streetscene or environment.
121. Deliveries to the residential units can be accommodated within the visitor space in the ground floor carpark, provided such delivery vehicles meet the maximum clearance of 2.4m. This is a satisfactory outcome given the loss of existing parking to the Easthampstead Road frontage and this change has adequately addressed reason for refusal 5 in the previous refusal of 181723.

Cycle Parking

122. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum cycle parking standards and P2 and P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD ensure that it is conveniently located, secure and undercover and provided where it is compatible in the streetscene.
123. The proposal makes provision for a bike storage area in the ground floor carpark between the front entrance to Easthampstead Road and the main passenger lift. It is secure, accessible, covered and conveniently located for residents. It is adequately sized to accommodate a dual level cycle storage rack system at a width/spacing of 0.375m for a total of 24 cycle spaces. This is sufficient for one space per 1 and 2 bedroom unit and two spaces for the two x 3-bedroom unit.
124. An additional bike storage area for visitors is located alongside the passenger lift and is capable of accommodating at least four bikes, which is acceptable and can complement the aforementioned shortfall. However, its location conflicts with the lift entrance and Condition 9 requires its relocation to the side of the passenger lift within the lobby.
125. In this respect, no objection is raised in relation to the provision of cycle parking, subject to provision of specific design specifications by Condition 9.

Access

126. Policy CP6(f) and (g) of the Core Strategy require the enhancement of road safety and no highway problems and R3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that parking spaces should be safe and convenient and sited to minimise impact upon safety. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
127. The introduction of rear access from Denton Road is not opposed from a highways perspective. When considering that Denton Road (and the private access leading from it) currently provides rear access to several businesses in Peach Street and Easthampstead Road, the introduction of a new access within the private road is not unreasonable.
128. Visibility splays have been provided at the entrance and these are to the satisfaction of the Highways Officer. The gate is setback in the site, which allows for a car to wait whilst waiting to proceed into the site. Internally, the aisle width within the carpark measures 6.0m and allows for forward movement to and from the site. There is also sufficient internal space within the car park to deal with the low likelihood of vehicles entering and exiting the garage at the same time.
129. Pedestrian access to the building is via the car park. However, it is accessed via a separated, fire rated, glazed walkway that extends between the front and rear lobby entrances. A third pedestrian entrance via the vehicular entrance is separated from vehicle routes by bollards. The passenger lift is two sided, which allows good connectivity. This resolves the second part of the concern that was originally raised in reason for refusal 10 of the previous refusal of 181723.
130. On this basis, no objection is raised on access grounds.

Traffic Generation

131. The application was supported by a Transport Statement and Travel Plan, both dated August 2018, which noted the following:
- Surveys undertaken in Denton Road in July 2018 indicate 26 AM peak hour traffic movements and 30 PM peak hour traffic movements as well as 325 daily movements and an average speed of 12mph
 - A review of personal injury collision data shows no collisions in the past five years within a 50m radius
 - Forecast trip generation using TRICS and 2011 census data indicates five additional two-way vehicle movements in the AM peak and eight two-way vehicle movements in the PM peak
 - With good access to services, facilities, schools, buses and rail, the development is conducive to walking and cycling
 - Existing retail parking at the front of the site will be lost. Given its central location in the town centre, there is access to existing Council owned car parks and it is probable that trips will be shared with other retail purposes within the town centre

- Denton Road is at least 5.5m in width and double-yellow lines prevent parking at all times, such that there is no foreseeable impediment to the flow of traffic arising from additional traffic movements

132. The contents of the two documents have been reviewed by the Council's Highways Officer. It is noted that the document relates to the previous scheme for 27 units and so the impacts should be less. Furthermore, there has been one incident in Denton Road since the finalisation of the Transport Statement on 5 December 2019, listed as 'slight' in severity.

133. Nonetheless, the Highways Officer agrees that it is unlikely that the traffic generated from a 22 unit, 23 space development would have an adverse impact on the highway network, including within Denton Road at the rear and that traffic safety is not an issue despite evidence of one recent vehicle collision. A large number of submissions have centered on this issue but the Council does not feel that it is such that it would warrant refusal on these grounds. The additional traffic movements would be adequately accommodated within the existing traffic movements, including during peak hour. However, the Travel Plan is deficient in some respects and requires further work to be of an acceptable standard.

134. On this basis, no objection is raised in relation to concerns about traffic generation, subject to the revision of the Travel Plan in Condition 7.

Construction Management

135. The Council's Highways Officer has requested a Demolition and Construction Management Plan because of the site constraints, its location on the interface between the retail frontage on Peach Street and Easthampstead Road and residential dwellings in Denton Road, high traffic levels on Easthampstead Road and manoeuvrability limitations within Denton Road. This is outlined in Condition 6.

Building Sustainability

136. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD require sustainable design and conservation and R21 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that new development contribute to environmental sustainability and the mitigation of climate change.

137. The supporting documentation indicates that the development would be detailed to comply with the Building Regulations and Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and in this respect, no objection is raised. Sustainability measures within the Planning Statement also include:

- Low energy lighting throughout with appropriate controls.
- Mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system comprising flow and return ducts to all rooms linked to an MVHR heat exchange box located on the flat roof
- Combi boilers
- Electric charging points

138. Any additional measures would form part of the requirement to satisfy the Building Regulations and on this basis, the proposal is acceptable in terms of Policy CC04 and R21.

139. Policy CC05 of the MDD Local Plan encourages renewable energy and decentralised energy networks, with encouragement of decentralised energy systems and a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions for developments of 10+ dwellings or in excess of 1000m². With 22 units, this requirement forms a Condition 13.

Waste Storage

140. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan requires adequate storage for the segregation of waste, recycling and composting. Waste storage should be consistent with the British Standards Institute 'Waste Management in Buildings - Code of practice (BS 5906:2005) and be conveniently located for residents within the building and for collection by the Council.

141. The proposal includes a 23m² bin storage room towards the rear of the carpark. It has sufficient capacity to accommodate the waste and recycling generation that would arise from a 22 unit residential building as well as the unimpeded manoeuvrability of bins. In this case, it includes 3 x 1100L and 11 x 240L blue wheeled bins and provision for food waste.

142. It is located adjacent to the rear entrance within 15m of a collection point, which is beyond the Council's maximum standard but this is acceptable to the Manager of Cleaner, Greener and Reactive Highway Services. On the basis of the above, no objection is raised.

Landscaping and Trees

143. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character. R14 of the Borough Design Guide SPD permits well-designed hard and soft landscaping that complements housing.

144. The northern end of Easthampstead Road is a Green Route Enhancement Area linking into the established Green Route that persists for the remainder of its length. The site itself is devoid of vegetation and there are no TPO protected trees in the immediate vicinity.

145. The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection, subject to additional amendments and enhancements to a future landscaping scheme in Condition 4 and details of ongoing management in Condition 5.

146. Small trees and shrubs should be included to provide shade, colour and movement and articulation to the building and narrow trees are to be included along this frontage to improve the streetscene and enhance the Green Route. The privacy screening along the northern side of the terrace is to be replaced with a green wall with vertical planting given its prominence and this is included in Condition 4.

147. Internally, the inclusion of a landscaped deck with water feature is acceptable, subject to the submission of construction details, planting specification, cultivation, irrigation, bird and bat boxes and surface materials as well as details of soil depth and hardness of trees (because it will be partially in shadow) in Condition 4. The intent is that the lawn space in addition to the fourth floor roof terrace will allow for a softening of the built form within the development and when viewed in the context of the surrounding townscape.

Ecology

148. Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.

149. The site is not located where bat roosts have been found and the building is unlikely to host roosting bats. As such, since bats or any other protected species are unlikely to be affected, the Council's Ecology Officer raises no objection. Notwithstanding this, paragraph 118 of the NPPF states that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged and this forms Condition 10.

Flooding

150. Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and the establishment of a mixed use development does not pose an adverse flood risk. It is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CC09.

Drainage

151. Policy CC10 of the MDD Local Plan requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow. Whilst the footprint of the building will be increasing, the amount of hardstanding across the site remains largely unchanged, as the frontage of the existing site is already hard paved. Furthermore, the proposal includes turf to the first floor terrace, which will aid in accounting for some on site infiltration and managed discharge or potential reuse. As such, it is feasible that surface water drainage can be improved and this will need to be demonstrated with the submission of a surface water drainage strategy, amongst other details, in Condition 15. It is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CC10.

152. Thames Water have reviewed the proposal and raise no in-principle objection. If the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water, no objection is raised. If discharge is to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. Protection of existing assets is detailed in the requirement for a piling method statement in Condition 16.

Environmental Health

153. There is no indication that the site or existing building is contaminated and no objection is raised by the Council's Environmental Health Officer on these grounds, subject to a 'watching brief' during demolition and groundworks to ensure

appropriate action is taken if contamination is discovered. This is outlined in Condition 17.

154. Construction noise and dust may pose an issue, particularly given its town centre location, higher densities and number of surrounding residents. To minimise potential impacts, a Construction Management Plan (CMP) is required by Condition 6.
155. There are no issues with imposing standard demolition and construction working hours (Condition 20) but because of its location on through roads and within walking distance of a nearby school, it would be prudent to further restrict timing for deliveries to be outside of the morning and afternoon peak hours and school drop off and pick up times. This is outlined in Condition 21.

Rights of Way

156. Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy and Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan refer to the need to retain and enhance rights of way. In this case, Wokingham Footpath 18 runs to the rear of this property, along the existing surfaced footway (South Place).
157. The Council's Public Rights of Way Officer notes that there are no long term implications for access along the right of way but as the path is a popular cut-through between the car park and Peach Street and construction works are very close to the right of way, Condition 6 requires construction details whereby access is maintained as part of a wider Construction Method Statement and Management Plan.

Affordable Housing

158. Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy, Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan and the Affordable Housing SPD specify an affordable housing rate of 30% for any development comprising more than 15 dwellings. With three existing second floor bedsit (studio) units, there is a net increase of 19 units and therefore, the affordable housing contribution equates to 5.7 units.
159. There was no documentation submitted as part of this application or the previous refused application relating to the provision of affordable housing (including any viability statement) and it formed a reason for refusal in the previous application. However, the refusal was because of the absence of a legal agreement to secure any affordable housing rather than any opposition from the agent/applicant to it being included. Given the application is acceptable on the other remaining planning grounds, it is acceptable in this case, subject to inclusion in the legal agreement.
160. The Council's affordable housing officer has reviewed the application and requires 3 x 2 bedroom flats for social rent and 2 x 2 bedroom flats for shared ownership. The shared ownership model is for a 35% minimum equity share on initial purchase and rent capped on the unsold equity at 1.5% per annum.
161. The affordable units should be transferred to the Council's Local Housing Company (Wokingham Housing Limited) or one of the Council's preferred

Registered Provider (RP) partners for a price that will enable the RP or Local Housing Company to deliver the affordable housing without the need for public subsidy.

162. The remaining 0.7 units would need to take the form of a commuted sum. Based on the Viability Study undertaken by Levvel Ltd, the Council's approach to calculating commuted sums for affordable housing is based on the difference in the residual development value of a scheme without on-site affordable housing and the same scheme with on-site affordable housing. The commuted sum sought in-lieu of 0.7 units is £43,380.61 index-linked.

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA)

163. Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy states that where development is likely to have an effect on the TBH SPA, it is required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.
164. The subject property is located within 5km of the TBH SPA and Policy CP8 states that where there is a net increase in dwellings within 5km of the SPA, an Appropriate Assessment is required to be undertaken to ascertain the likely impacts and required mitigation to offset any harm to the TBH SPA. The proposal involves a net increase of 19 units.
165. An Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken and is included at Appendix 1. In this case, the proposal is acceptable and contributions to access management measures and monitoring in line with the Delivery Framework will be required. This is in the form of a monetary contribution of £40,224.89 towards Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in the Rocks Nest Wood SANG and ongoing SAMM monitoring totalling £9,667.89. This is secured in a Section 106 agreement as noted in Informative 1.

Employment Skills

166. Policy TB12 of the MDD Local Plan requires an employment skills plan (ESP) for this development. ESPs use the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) benchmark based on the value of construction. This is calculated by multiplying the total floor space (approximately 2350m²) by £1025, which is the cost of construction per square metre as set out by Building Cost Information Service of RICS and the methodology as set out in the Council's Employment and Skills Guidance. In this case, it totals £1,558,000.
167. The ESP would require a total of three community skills support jobs and the creation of one job. If for any reason the applicant is unable to deliver the plan or elects to pay the contribution, the employment outcomes of the plan will be borne by the Council at a contribution of £3,750. Either way, this is secured by Condition 14 but it may instead be necessary to form part of the legal agreement.

Community Infrastructure Levy

168. The application is liable for CIL payments because it involves a net increase in dwellings and additional floor space in excess of 100m². It is payable at £365/m²

index linked and the total amount payable is subject to a post determination review.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

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

CONCLUSION

170. The previous application was refused for 13 reasons, all of which are now resolved as follows:

- 1) Impact upon the character of the area, conservation area and nearby listed buildings: The changes to the scale and form of the building as it presents to Easthampstead Road and Denton Road have resulted in a building that is much more compatible with the surrounding built form.
- 2) Substandard internal amenity: The cumulative issues with internal amenity have been resolved, with an adequate level of amenity now provided.
- 3) Lack of usable amenity space: The proposal has significantly increased the amount of outdoor amenity space per unit and three units now have separate private amenity space. On balance, this is acceptable.
- 4) Impact upon neighbour amenity: A reduction in the bulk and height of the building and privacy screening where relevant has eliminated any undue amenity concerns to neighbours
- 5) Inadequate off street parking: The car parking to unit ratio is now one space per unit, an additional delivery/visitor space and three motorcycle spaces have been provided such that the proposal is acceptable, subject to Conditions 6-8, 24 and 25.
- 6) Potential loss of heritage significance: No further details were supplied but Condition 3 requires submission of such details, and its reuse if necessary, prior to demolition of the existing building.
- 7) Loss of office accommodation: Where no in-principle objection was previously raised, a further review concludes that the provision of residential accommodation outweighs the minor concerns of the loss of non-residential floorspace.
- 8) Inappropriate unit mix: The mix has altered with additional 3-bedroom units and a reduction in the total number of units such that an objection is no longer raised.
- 9) Lack of accessible units: Three units and car spaces will be accessible in accordance with relevant policy.
- 10) Residential access: This has been addressed by providing improved entrances, particularly from the rear near South Place. Internal access between the lobby and pedestrian lift no longer requires accessing the car park.

- 11) Lack of affordable housing: 30% of the development will be affordable in accordance with policy and this is secured by legal agreement.
- 12) Impact upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area: An Appropriate Assessment and this is secured by legal agreement.
- 13) Lack of archaeological mitigation: A desktop study was provided and Berkshire Archaeology no longer raise objection, subject to Condition 12

171. On balance, the proposal represents a satisfactory redevelopment of the site that takes advantage of the town centre location and respects the Wokingham Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings. It also achieves a satisfactory parking and traffic outcome and will ensure the adequate retention of amenity for surrounding residents. The loss of non-residential floor space is offset and outweighed by the provision of a high density residential development comprising 22 units. Several pre commencement details are required in Conditions 3-18 and subject to these requirements, the proposal achieves an appropriate development in a suitable location.