

Agenda Item 6.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
202065	11 June 2021	Wokingham	Emmbrook;

Applicant	McCarthy & Stone
Site Address	54 – 58 Reading Road, Wokingham, RG41 1EH
Proposal	Full application for the proposed erection of 34 no. retirement living apartments including communal facilities and associated car parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing 3 no. dwellings.
Type	Full
PS Category	1
Officer	Graham Vaughan
Reason for determination by committee	Major application

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 9 June 2021
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place

SUMMARY
<p>The site is located within Wokingham and, in policy terms, within a major development location. Currently the site is occupied by three dwellings with associated gardens and parking. An area of overgrown grassland exists to the rear which adjoins the Wokingham train station car park. Mature trees exist on and around the site which help filter views.</p> <p>The scheme is for the erection a three-storey apartment building for the elderly as part of a standard product by the applicant, McCarthy & Stone. It would have a large, single footprint but its form would be broken up using architectural features. Access would be provided by an entrance and exit access to Reading Road, and this would link to a parking area to the rear of the site. Additionally, the area around the building would be grassed with some areas of patio for ground floor flats. A garden area is proposed adjacent to the car park.</p> <p>In terms of the principle of development, the scheme would provide for a recognised need with regards to housing for a particular group. It is noted that this can also help to ‘free-up’ existing housing stock. As noted above, the scheme would have a large single footprint, and this results in a significant increase in mass and built form on the site. However, when taking into context the surrounding area, this is not considered to be harmful. It is noted that there would be some harm to the setting of the adjacent listed building; St. Paul’s Church, but this would be ‘less than substantial’. Indeed, in other respects including residential amenity, highways, drainage, environmental health, trees and landscape, the scheme would have a positive impact. For viability reasons, the affordable housing contribution is reduced but this is considered a minor negative impact.</p> <p>Overall, the positive impacts of the scheme are considered to outweigh the minor negative impacts and therefore, subject to the conditions set out below and the signing of a legal agreement, the scheme is recommended for approval.</p>

PLANNING STATUS

Water Utility Consultation Zones
Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
Green Routes and Riverside Paths
Heathrow Aerodrome Consultation Zone
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Borough Parishes
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Site Allocations
District Town and Local Centres
Major Transport Schemes
Public Open Space
Tree Preservation Orders
Borough Wards
Sites of Urban Landscape Value
Landscape Character Assessment Area
Local Plan Update Submitted Sites
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones
Green Routes and Riverside Paths Consultation Zone

RECOMMENDATION

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

A. Completion of a legal agreement to secure an off-site contribution towards the provision of affordable housing and either a contribution towards the Council's employment skills plan or the provision of a site-specific employment skills plan.

If the Agreement is not completed within 3 months of the date of this resolution, Planning Permission will be refused unless the Operational Manager for Development Management in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee agree to a later date.

B. Conditions and informatives:

Conditions

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

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

2. Approved details - This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered '19 - 2923 - LP01', '19 - J2923 - 200 Rev B', '19 - J2923 - 201 Rev B', '19 - J2923 - 202 Rev B', '19 - 2923 - 203.1 Rev C', '19 - 2923 - 203 Rev C', '19 - 2923 - 204 Rev B', '19 - 2923 - 204.1 Rev B', '19 - 2923 - 205 Rev A', '19 - 2923 - 206 Rev A', '19 - J2923 - 207', '19-2923-208 Rev B', '01 Site Survey', 'PP/4001/Wokingham/F1' and 'PP/4001/Wokingham/F1' received by the local planning authority on 7 September 2020. 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. External materials - Prior to the commencement of above ground works, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

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

4. Archaeological Potential - Prior to the commencement of development, other than demolition to ground level, the applicant, their agents or successors in title, shall implement a programme of field evaluation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The results of the evaluation shall inform the preparation of a mitigation strategy which will be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The mitigation strategy shall provide for:

a) a programme of site investigation and recording, or alternative mitigation, within any areas of archaeological interest identified. Development will not commence within the area of archaeological interest until the site investigation has been satisfactorily completed; and,

b) a programme of post-investigation assessment, analysis, publication, dissemination and archiving. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements of the programme have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI.

Reason: The site lies in an area of potential for medieval remains. The potential impacts can be mitigated by a programme of archaeological work to record and advance our understanding of any heritage assets to be lost in accordance with national and local planning policy. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB25.

5. Bat Licence - No works, including demolition of buildings or removal of standing deadwood trees, shall commence until a licence for development works affecting bats has been obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England) and a copy (or an email from Natural England that the site has been registered under the bat mitigation class licence) has been submitted to the local planning authority. Thereafter mitigation measures approved in the licence shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details. Should conditions at the site for bats change and / or the applicant conclude that a licence for development works affecting bats is not required the applicant is to submit a report to the council detailing the reasons for this assessment along with any remaining mitigation and enhancement strategy and this report is to be approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to commencement of works.

Reason: To ensure that bats, a protected species and material consideration, are not adversely affected by the development. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP7 and MDD Local Plan policy TB23.

6. Prior to commencement of the development a detailed Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Strategy shall include:

- (i) a biodiversity net gain calculator using the latest Defra metric and based on the detailed soft and hard landscape plans; and
- (ii) details of any off-site offset scheme required to achieve a minimum 10% net gain over the baseline in all categories of the calculator.

The approved strategy be implemented in full in the course of the development unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development results in a net gain for biodiversity, as appropriate under Section 15 of the NPPF.

7. Reptile Strategy - Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, a strategy for reptile mitigation and Stag beetle habitat enhancement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local authority. This strategy shall be prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist and appropriate to the local ecological context. Once approved the strategy shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed by the local authority in writing.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal is in accordance with Section 41 NERC Act re. UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (Species of Principal Importance), and complies with Planning Policies for Wildlife including CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), and the National Planning Policy Framework.

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

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

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

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

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

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

10. Details of boundary walls and fences - Prior to the commencement of above ground works, details of all boundary treatment(s) shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented

prior to the first occupation of the development or phased as agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.

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

11. Landscaping - Prior to the commencement of above ground works, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure (e.g. furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc). Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

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

12. Protection of trees - a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place on site.

c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval in writing of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works

commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

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

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

14. External lighting - Prior to the commencement of above ground works, details of any proposed external lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall set out the steps that will be taken to ensure that external lighting does not cause a nuisance to local residents including future residents of the site and shall include details of location, direction and level of illumination.

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3.

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

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

16. Heritage works - Notwithstanding the details submitted prior to the commencement of above ground works, details for the proposed landscaping and tree planting adjacent to the boundary to the churchyard are to be submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Landscaping and tree planting beside the boundary wall to the churchyard shall then be undertaken in accordance with the details as approved.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the setting of heritage asset. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24.

17. Travel Plan - Prior to the occupation of the development a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The travel plan shall include a programme of implementation and proposals to promote alternative forms of transport

to and from the site, other than by the private car and provide for periodic review. The travel plan shall be fully implemented, maintained and reviewed as so-approved.

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

18. Age restriction - The apartments hereby approved shall only be occupied by persons over the age of 55 and by any wife, husband or partner of such a person unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP7.

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

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

20. Mobile Buggy Parking - No building shall be occupied until secure and covered parking for mobility buggies has been provided in accordance with the approved drawing(s)/details. The mobility buggy parking/ storage shall be permanently so retained for the parking of mobility buggies and used for no other purpose.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and convenience and providing a functional, accessible and safe development and in the interests of amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

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

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

22. Access to be provided - No building shall be occupied until the access has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans. The works are to include dropped kerbs, tactile paving and the stopping up and reinstatement of the footways where redundant residential accesses exist before the development.

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

23. Prior to occupation of the development hereby approved, a CCTV scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include the type of camera / quality of image (which should be identification, recognition and observational quality) and location of the cameras. The camera system shall be installed as per the approved details and maintained as such during the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To create safe and accessible environments where crime, disorder, and the fear of crime are reduced. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP1.

24. Drainage Strategy - The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details as agreed in 'Drainage Strategy Report, Infrastructure Design Limited, IDL/1011/DS/01 25 March 2020 and plan SE-2661-03-DE-151 Maintenance Strategy for Drainage' received by the Local Planning Authority on 7 September 2020 and 28 October 2020. The measures contained within the plan and

report shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

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

25. Energy Assessment - The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details as agreed in 'Energy and Sustainability Assessment, Focus Consultants February 2020' received by the Local Planning Authority on 7 September 2020. The measures contained within the report shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC05 & the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

26. Noise Impact - The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details as agreed in 'Noise Impact Assessment, 24 Acoustics, R8447-1 Rev 0, 31 March 2020' received by the Local Planning Authority on 7 September 2020. The measures contained within the survey shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of future residents. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3.

27. Construction Method Statement - The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details as agreed in 'Construction Method Statement, McCarthy & Stone, 28 August 2020' received by the Local Planning Authority on 7 September 2020 so far as they relate to the measures to minimise the environmental impacts of construction and demolition. The measures contained within the report shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of future residents. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3.

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

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

29. Removal of demolished materials - All materials arising from the demolition of buildings on the site shall be 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.

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

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

31. Contamination - In the event that contamination is found at any time during site clearance, groundwork and construction, the discovery shall be reported within two weeks to the local planning authority and a full contamination risk assessment shall be carried out (with a 'remediation method statement' if required) and submitted to the local planning authority within eight weeks of the discovery. Works thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved 'remediation method statement' and a final validation report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to occupation of the development hereby approved.

Reason: To protect future occupiers and users of the site from the harmful effects of contamination. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP1.

32. Contamination - In the event that no evidence of contamination is found during the construction of the development a statement to that effect shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to occupation of the development hereby approved.

Reason: To protect future occupiers and users of the site from the harmful effects of contamination. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP1.

Informatives

1. 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.

2. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. Should you require further information please refer to the Thames Water website.

3. With regard to waste services, the applicant is advised to consider the details on the Council's website.

4. The applicant is advised that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service have provided details of site specific matters that could be used to help ensure an effective response to an emergency.

5. 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.

6. This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act dated [INSERT], the obligations in which relate to this development.

7. 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 the Council's website.

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

a) addressing the evolving planning policy context; b) a full pre- application process was undertaken by the applicant; and, c) planning issues relating to ecology, highway safety, tree and landscape matters.

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.

9. Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel.: 0118 9746000.

10. The developer's attention is drawn to the fact that this permission does not authorise the physical construction of the proposed off-site highway works and site access connections to the public highway. A separate legal agreement made with the Council under s.278 of the Highways Act 1980 is required. No work within or affecting the public highway shall commence until the agreement has been completed and the Council, as local highway authority, has approved all construction and installation details together with a programme of works.

11. 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.

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
F/2005/4471 (58 Reading Road)	Proposed erection of a two and a half storey building to provide 5 flats and parking. Demolition of existing dwelling.	Conditional approval 7 July 2006
CLE/2010/205 7 (58 Reading Road)	Application for a Certificate of Proposed Lawfulness to establish that the development approved in planning permission F/2005/4471 was commenced within 3 years of the date of the approval in accordance with condition 1 of that permission and that continuing development in respect of the permission is lawful.	Approval 29 October 2010
F/2009/1180 (52 Reading Road)	Proposed change of use from residential to office accommodation with associated community support facilities plus temporary siting of modular unit plus provision of extension to dropped kerb to allow vehicular access	Conditional approval 19 August 2009
163444 (52 Reading Road)	Full application for the proposed erection of supported affordable housing consisting 7no bedsitting rooms, 2no single person flats and supporting ancillary accommodation, car parking, motorcycle parking, covered cycle storage and garden, following demolition of existing building.	Conditional approval 1 February 2017
180320 (52 Reading Road)	Change of use of land from landscaped amenity open space to private amenity space to create a larger garden for supported housing	Conditional approval 12 April 2018
F/2012/1444 (Station Link Road)	Demolition of numbers 48 and 50 Reading Road and construction of a single carriageway link road of approximately 336 metres in length connecting the A321 Wellington Road and the A329 Reading Road (part one-way and part two-way operation); provision of a new combined footway and cycleway along the link road, a transport interchange at Wokingham Railway Station, four new traffic signal controlled junctions and associated alterations, landscaping, two noise barriers and provision of new pedestrian crossing facilities.	Conditional approval 1 February 2013

RAIL/2011/2049 (Wokingham Train Station)	Application by Network Rail for approval of details for the redevelopment of Wokingham Station under the National Station Improvement Programme (NSIP), to include demolition of existing station building and adjacent staff accommodation buildings.	Conditional approval 21 December 2011
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SUMMARY INFORMATION	
For Residential	
Site Area	0.45 hectares
Existing units	3
Proposed units	34
Existing density – dwellings/hectare	6.6
Proposed density - dwellings/hectare	75.5
Number of affordable units proposed	Off-site contribution of £400,000
Previous land use	Residential
Proposed Public Open Space	Not required
Existing parking spaces	Minimum of 6
Proposed parking spaces	32

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust	No comments received
Berkshire Archaeology	No objection subject to condition (4)
Crime Prevention Design Officer	No objection subject to conditions (14, 23)
National Grid	No comments received
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue	No objection
Southern Gas Networks	No objection subject to informative
SEE Power Distribution	No comments received
Thames Water	No objection subject to informative (1 – 3)
NHS Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group	No comments received
Historic England	No objection
WBC Cleaner & Greener (Waste Services)	No comments received
WBC Drainage	No objection
WBC Ecology	No objection subject to conditions (5 – 7)
WBC Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions (27, 31, 32)
WBC Economic Prosperity and Place (Community Infrastructure)	No objection subject to legal agreement
WBC Green Infrastructure	No objection
WBC Growth & Delivery (Planning Policy)	No objection
WBC Heritage	No objection subject to conditions (16)
WBC Highways	No objection subject to conditions (8, 15, 17 – 22, 27)
WBC Tree & Landscape	No objection subject to conditions (9 – 13)
WBC Property Services	No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS
Town/Parish Council: No objection

Local Members: One letter of comment from Councillor Rachel Bishop-Firth stating support of smaller homes for older residents but requests consideration of traffic joining Reading Road.

Neighbours: One letter of comment received stating no objection to the plan and the developer should work closely with the adjacent Church community to mitigate the impact of building work.

APPLICANTS POINTS

- There is an accepted need for this type of housing and it would 'free-up' existing housing stock.
- Significant consideration has gone into the design of the scheme and its impact on the adjacent listed building.
- The scheme has been considered through a Road Safety Audit in terms of the impact on Reading Road traffic flow.

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP2	Inclusive Communities
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP4	Infrastructure Requirements
	CP5	Housing mix, density and affordability
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP8	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP17	Housing Delivery
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC02	Development Limits
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC04	Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC05	Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks
	CC06	Noise
	CC07	Parking
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB05	Housing Mix

	TB08	Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Standards
	TB09	Residential Accommodation for Vulnerable Groups
	TB12	Employment Skills Plan
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB22	Sites of Urban Landscape Value
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
	TB24	Designated Heritage Assets
	TB25	Archaeology
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	BDG	Borough Design Guide
		National Internal Space Standards
		CIL Guidance + 123 List
		Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
		Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

1. The proposal is for the erection of a 34 unit retirement living apartment scheme with associated communal facilities, parking and landscaping and would follow the demolition of properties 54 – 58 Reading Road. The scheme would be intended for older persons with an emphasis on providing independent living rather than with immediate medical care on site. As such, the scheme would involve level access to all apartments, lifts to the first floor and above, communal areas including residents' lounge, refuse room and a mobility scooter store as well as an on-site house manager.
2. Due to the shape of the proposal site, the building has been designed in a 'T' shape with the main body of the building addressing Reading Road and a further element projecting into the site. At its widest, the building would be 35.5 metres and at its longest the building would be 50.3 metres. It would be three storeys and the highest ridge point would be 9.5 metres. In respect of the existing three dwellings on the site, the front elevation would have projecting elements. A separate entrance and exit to Reading Road as well as some parking spaces would be provided to the front of the site. The access road would continue along the south eastern edge of the site to a larger parking area as well as the communal garden area.
3. For clarity, the scheme was considered at the pre-application stage which has helped inform the design of proposal as well as specific consultee matters.

Principle of Development:

4. 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 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.

5. The site is within a major development location and therefore development is acceptable in principle in these areas as outlined through policies CP9 of the Core Strategy and CC02 of the MDD Local Plan. The scheme would not lead to a net loss of C3 use type housing and therefore no conflict with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy arises.
6. As set out in the submissions, there is an identified need for the type of housing proposed: C3 use but with communal facilities on site for elderly accommodation. Whilst the policy response raises a query about the type of housing proposed, from a planning perspective it is recognised as 'sheltered accommodation'. This is accepted as typically being "*purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager*" as set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 10).
7. The need for this type of housing is recognised as a national issue in the NPPF and also at the local level through the Housing Market Assessment (HMA) which projects the growth of an elderly population in the next 20 years. Whilst it is accepted the most up-to-date information is shown through the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (January 2020), it nonetheless identifies a need for this type of housing as found in the HMA. The submissions also make the point that the provision of this type of housing helps 'free up' existing housing stock which is considered beneficial to housing land supply factors. Furthermore, policy CP2 of the Core Strategy states, "to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities (including the provision of community facilities) to meet long term needs, planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of: an ageing population, particularly in terms of housing, health and wellbeing". Policy TB09 of the MDD also supports, in principle, schemes that provide for the elderly through purpose built accommodation. The issues as set out are accepted and it is considered no conflict with the principle of development arises.
8. For confirmation, whilst the site comprises part of the allocation for works to Wokingham Train Station through policy SAL09, no conflict arises regarding the site being available for transport related schemes. It is considered the station rail link project has been completed and the site would not be required to contribute towards this. On the basis of the above, no conflict in terms of the principle of development arises.

Character of the Area:

9. *Existing:* Development along Reading Road has been established for some time with St. Paul's Church being a defining point of the development of Wokingham. The existing residential properties at the site were clearly later additions and were part of a line of dwellings that extended to what is now the Wade Centre for the elderly. This particular element was altered through the construction of Station Approach which necessitated the removal of some of these dwellings. Additionally, the car park deck structure and the train station redevelopment itself

are examples of modern-day changes nearby the site. On the opposite side of the site, Beeches Manor, a two storey, single footprint building providing extra-care services for the elderly was constructed within the last 10 years. In looking at the grain of development in the area, it can be seen that there are examples of buildings/structures with a large footprint that are set within a large site. St Paul's Church is the closest example but the car park decking, the train station, Beeches Manor, The Holt School, Imperial Court and even the Council offices themselves are relevant examples.

10. It is important to note that the adjoining church is Grade II* listed and set within a designated Site of Urban Landscape Value. Reading Road is also a Green Route and therefore these planning protections require that any scheme is considerate towards them.
11. *Layout:* The proposal would include the main building to the north eastern part of the site which would essentially occupy the footprint of the current dwellings and their respective amenity space. The access road would be located at the south eastern edge and the car parking/garden area to the south. Whilst the irregularity of the shape of the site is acknowledged, it is considered this ultimately would utilise the site effectively by providing a building and the necessary ancillary aspects. It is also acknowledged that the scheme would result in a single footprint on the site which would be different from the three separate existing dwellings. Nonetheless, as set out above, there are already examples around the site where this occurs and, as such, no conflict with the established character of the area would occur.
12. *Scale and Massing:* The proposed building has a single footprint due to the applicant's desire to provide a certain product; specifically, a building containing multiple apartments that have step-free access and share a communal area. Ultimately this results in a large scale building with considerable more bulk and mass than the current three dwellings on the site. In terms of the height of the scheme, the submitted street scene plan indicates the ridge height would only be marginally higher than the existing buildings. Nonetheless, this would be visible for a much greater section of Reading Road than current i.e. the built form is not broken up by pitched roofs and instead is noticeable across the whole elevation. Adding to this, the projection of the building into the site and the visibility of the side elevation, particularly in views from and around the church, would create a sense of built form greater than at present.
13. In response to concerns raised at the pre-application stage, the applicant has amended the design of the building further. In particular, this has involved shifting the rear projection of the building further to the south east to help prevent views of the side elevation from Reading Road. An additional 'step' of the building has also been designed along the north western elevation to again reduce the amount of built form that would be visible. To help visualise the scheme in context, the applicant has also provided visual representations of the scheme. These were achieved by digitally inserting a 3D projection of the scheme into a picture of the site taken at different viewpoints. They indicate that, clearly the scheme would introduce a large building into the street scene, and this would be most noticeable from the station car parking deck and the junction of Reading Road with Station Approach, however existing vegetation would help filter views into the site. Additionally, the scheme would not appear substantially higher than

the immediate neighbouring building, 52 Reading Road. They also show that from Station Approach in particular, the existing vegetation prevents any substantial view into the site. Indeed, the submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment identifies the two major visual effects would be from Reading Road adjacent to the site (viewpoint 5) and from the adjacent churchyard (viewpoint 3). The Tree and Landscape Officer agrees that the impact from these viewpoints would be medium as *“although the proposed development will be prominent it is not considered to be uncharacteristic when considered against the receiving landscape”*.

14. *Materials and Design Features:* Due to the three-storey scale of the proposal, it is acknowledged there is a sense of verticality to the building. To help break this up, the scheme has stepped eaves heights and, particularly at the front, projecting gables to give a sense of the three properties that currently exist on the site. Additionally, material changes have been organised on a horizontal basis to give greater articulation to the building and compliment the stepping of the elevations. The materials proposed are a mix of surrounding materials found in the street scene however it is noted that the use of brick facades with brick detailing is the most common feature and therefore the scheme exemplifies this. Overall, the materials and design features used allow for an active frontage on all sides of the building.
15. *Landscaping:* The scheme would require the removal of four trees (two that have died and two to be replaced with better specimen trees) and, through a landscaping scheme, it is expected that these would be replaced and additional trees planted. Although precise numbers would be agreed at a conditions stage, a Landscaping Strategy suggests that approximately 40 trees would be planted and the Tree and Landscape Officer supports this. Specifically, the use of landscaping would help mitigate the increase in built form and enhance the Green Route. It is noted that the provision of a boundary hedgerow with specimen trees along the Churchyard boundary would help reduce the dominance of the building. On the basis of the above, the Tree and Landscape Officer does not object to the proposal, subject to conditions (9 – 13).
16. *Conclusion:* The proposed scheme would result in a large building where currently three dwellings of typical two storey scale exist. Whilst there would be a noticeable change in the immediate vicinity of the site, the overall landscape is one of built form and indeed one that contains buildings with a single large footprint. The use of appropriate materials, the breaking up of the form of the building through design features and the enhancements to existing landscaping would ensure that the scheme would assimilate into the character of the area. As such, the scheme is considered appropriate in its context which takes account of the Site of Urban Landscape Value, the Grade II* listed church and the Green Route. Therefore the scheme is in accordance with policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and policies CC03, TB21, TB22 and TB24 of the MDD Local Plan.

Listed Building:

17. The Church of St. Paul is located adjacent to and north west of the site and is Grade II* listed. At its closest point, it is 29 metres from the site boundary and, as such, there is no harm to the historic fabric of the building. Nonetheless, there could be impact upon the setting of the building. The Heritage Officer notes that setting is defined in the NPPF as being “the surroundings in which a heritage

asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral”.

18. The proposal would result in the building being marginally further away than the current dwelling however the scale of the building would be substantially increased and, ultimately, would be more noticeable in short range views from and around the church. It is noted that, in the context of the listed building, the main change has been the development around the 1930s of the series of detached dwellings along Reading Road. On this basis therefore it is acknowledged that the scheme would introduce built form in the vicinity of the church which would not be in keeping with the historic ‘lack of development’ and therefore harm arises. The scale of this harm however is not considered to be substantial given the distance from the building and the wider context of the development of Wokingham town. Indeed, the Heritage Officer agrees with the conclusion of the Heritage Statement that the scheme ranges between ‘minor adverse’ to ‘no impact’ on heritage assets around the site. As such, in terms of the NPPF impact, the scheme results in “less than substantial harm” and this needs to be weighed against the benefits of the scheme. It should be noted that Historic England have raised no objection to the proposal.

19. On a separate issue, the Heritage Officer has raised concern regarding the impact of excavation and planting along the boundary wall with the adjacent church yard due to the potential for the wall to be damaged. Nonetheless, they consider that subject to further details sought by condition (16), this issue could be overcome.

Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers:

20. The only immediate neighbouring property would be 52 Reading Road. For clarity, this is a supported affordable housing property i.e., a quasi-residential use. Due to the separation distance to this property, no concerns are raised with regard to any overbearing or loss of light impact. It is noted however that the proposal would include windows facing this site along the south eastern elevation which would provide opportunities for overlooking to the amenity space. The Borough Design Guide advises that proposals above two storeys should maintain a separation distance of at least 15 metres in terms of flank to rear relationships. It is considered this is the most appropriate assessment to make and the proposal would accord with this. As such, no conflict with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy arises.

Amenity of Future Occupiers:

21. *Internal Space:* Internal space standards are set nationally and based on the number of bedrooms. The submitted plans indicate that the scheme would exceed the minimum amount of floor space required and therefore no objection is raised with regard to this. It should also be noted that the scheme includes a communal lounge within the building which adds to the overall provision.

22. *Amenity Space:* The provision of amenity space would be through two distinct areas; a mix of soft and hard landscaped areas immediately around the building comprising of approximately 670m²; and a more informal area adjacent to the car park, comprising of approximately 400m² with potential seating areas. It is

considered this would be appropriate for the scale of development and is in accordance with advice set out in the Borough Design Guide that flat proposals allow for shared amenity space.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

23. *Highway Safety:* The site is accessed from Reading Road, a major road within Wokingham which experiences a high level of traffic. It is proposed for the site to be accessed using an in/out access arrangement and therefore a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been undertaken to accompany a Transport Statement with the application.
24. The access is in close proximity to the Station Approach/Reading Road junction and also a number of right turn lanes on Reading Road. The trip generation of the scheme is stated as being an increase above the existing of one trip in the AM period, two trips in the PM period and 12 trips across a 12-hour period. The Transport Statement considers this to be negligible in terms of the impact on the highway network. The number of rights turns from Reading Road was also surveyed and this concluded that the number for the bowling club were infrequent but the youth centre higher than expected. Nonetheless, the survey results demonstrate that that the existing right turn lanes would have minimal conflict with the proposed development on right turn lanes and the proposed development site.
25. The Highways Officer has considered the submitted information and agrees with the recommendations of the Road Safety Audit. As such, subject to conditions (17, 19, 21, 22), no conflict with policy CP6 of the Core Strategy is considered to arise.
26. *Accessibility:* The site is located in a major development location and a short distance from Wokingham town centre. It is also in close proximity to Wokingham Railway station, bus stops for local services and accessed from a major road within the town. In this respect, it is considered that the site is accessible by a range of transport modes as well as being within walking distance of day-to-day shopping needs. As such, the scheme complies with policy CP6 of the Core Strategy.
27. *Parking Provision:* The scheme proposes a total of 32 unallocated parking spaces with four provided near the front of the site and the remaining 28 (including two disabled spaces) at the rear of the site. The adopted parking standards indicate that a C3 use type of this scale would require a total of 38 unallocated parking spaces and therefore there is a shortfall of six spaces. Notwithstanding this, the applicant has provided information regarding car ownership for similar sized schemes across the country and, ultimately, the demand for parking spaces is lower due to the typical person living on the site. The Highways Officer is satisfied that a lower parking provision would not cause undue parking issues around the site on the basis of this information however, they recommend that a condition (18) is applied to ensure the age of occupants is maintained as per the additional information.
28. It is acknowledged that the scheme may require a manager/member of staff to be on site and this would necessitate a parking space. However, this could be

accommodated within the provision noted above and, as such, no objection is raised.

29. *Cycle Provision:* As noted above, the applicant has provided information regarding the demand for cycle parking which would equate to one space required for the development. This, along with visitor cycle parking is proposed to be provided within the mobility buggy store on the site. Again, the Highways Officer is satisfied with this subject to a condition (15).

30. *Waste collection:* It is considered that a waste vehicle could successfully enter and exit the site with the proposed arrangement, and this would allow for the safe collection of waste.

Crime Prevention:

31. The Crime Prevention Design Advisor has considered the scheme and noted areas that could be improved to deter criminal activity and also provide safety for residents. It is noted however that elements of this are not material considerations to the application including, for example, the provision (or lack of) a 'trades' entrance button. Nonetheless, discussions with the applicant have occurred and specific matters are addressed below.

32. With regard to the provision of solid panel fencing along the boundary with the church, it is considered this would lead to harm in terms of views in and out of the site and therefore further harm to the setting of the listed building. It is proposed to provide defensible planting along the boundary which would deter movement and be in line with 'Secured by Design' guidance. This is considered an appropriate balance to make.

33. An external lighting strategy has not been submitted and this has been highlighted by the Crime Prevention Design Advisor. Nonetheless, this can be secured by condition (14). Similarly, a CCTV strategy could be secured through a condition (23). Aspects such as postal deliveries and access controls in terms of a reception desk would be resolved through the applicant's typical approach i.e., this is not a material planning consideration. Clarification on the use of emergency exits has been provided and this is considered satisfactory.

Flooding and Drainage:

34. As the proposal is a major development and the site is subject to pluvial flooding then a Flood Risk Assessment is required. At the pre-application stage, the Drainage Officer raised queries on the surface water drainage system being designed not to flood any part of the site in a 1 in 30 year return period design storm; any overland flows being intercepted before it enters the proposed site; and, consent being obtained from the relevant Water Company if the proposal is to discharge surface water runoff into a surface water sewer or combined sewer. The submitted flood risk assessment provides sufficient information on these matters for the drainage officer to be satisfied that, subject to a condition (24) requiring the drainage strategy to be carried out, there would not be a harmful impact in terms of flooding or drainage in relation to the proposal. On this basis, no conflict with policy CC09 or CC10 of the MDD Local Plan arises.

Landscape and Trees:

35. A Tree Survey and Impact Assessment with accompanying Tree Constraints Plan and Tree protection Plan have been provided to support the application. These note that there a number of trees within the site protected by TPO 1147/2006 & 1116/2006 however a number of the TPO oaks are now dead and will need to be removed. The Tree and Landscape Officer has considered the submitted information and notes that the most significant trees are being retained as well as landscape mitigation occurring for the increase in built form on the site particularly through a boundary hedgerow with specimen trees along the north western boundary. In addition, the Tree and Landscape Officer notes that some further details regarding trees including the replacement of the dead oak trees, the replacement and therefore enhancement of two category C trees and clarification on species set out in the landscape strategy would be required however this can be resolved through the use of conditions (9 – 13). As such, with regard to specific tree matters, subject to conditions, the scheme accords with policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan.

Environmental Health:

36. At the pre-application stage, the Environmental Health Officer considered the main issues were potentially contaminated land and the mitigation of noise from nearby traffic. As such, a Geotechnical Study and Investigation Report and a Noise Impact Assessment have been submitted.

37. *Potentially Contaminated Land:* The Geotechnical report states that following investigation, no substantially harmful contamination was found at the site and therefore the risk to the end users of the site (in this case a residential use) would be very low. The report considers that certain building techniques may be required in terms of the foundations but this should be achievable. The Environmental Health Officer has considered this report and agrees with its recommendations subject to a condition (31, 32).

38. *Noise Impact:* The Noise Impact Assessment states that the ambient noise levels for day and night times were established and then applied to the proposed development. On the basis of using sufficient glazing and ventilation systems, the assessment concludes that the level of noise heard internally would be within the maximum level expected of such areas. The Environmental Health Officer has considered this report and agrees with its recommendations subject to a condition (26).

Ecology:

39. The site contains habitats suitable for protected and priority species including bats, reptiles and hedgehogs. Given the potential impact on these species, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Inspection has been submitted. The appraisal notes that no harmful impact would occur with regard to protected sites, protected habitats (ancient woodland, hedgerows or habitats of principal importance) and biodiversity opportunity areas. With regard to species, it considers no harmful impacts would occur in terms of amphibians, badgers and nesting birds (subject to not carrying out clearing works within nesting season). In terms of reptiles and bats, the survey considers the site could support suitable habitats for these and therefore additional survey work is required to ascertain if they are present on the site.

40. With regard to reptiles, the survey found evidence of them on site and proposes to translocate them elsewhere. The Ecology Officer notes that the survey was conducted appropriately but the information on translocation is not detailed. Nonetheless, they consider a condition (7) requiring further information would overcome this. With regard to bats the survey found evidence of a roost on the site; in deadwood and also one of the buildings. On this basis, the Ecology Officer considers a derogation licence from Natural England is required prior to work taking place on site which, again, could be controlled through a condition (5).

41. The NPPF aims to secure net gain in terms of biodiversity and, in this instance, the Ecology Officer advised a net gain calculator be used to ascertain this. The calculator indicates that through the proposed landscaping scheme and the translocation of reptiles off the site, a 10% increase could be achieved. However, further details of this (including the strategy for translocation) would be required by condition (6). As such, subject to these conditions, it is considered the scheme accords with policies CP7 of the Core Strategy and TB23 of the MDD Local Plan.

Sustainable Design and Construction:

42. As per policy CC05 of the MDD Local Plan, the scheme meets the threshold to demonstrate that a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions through renewable energy or low carbon technology can be achieved. The submitted Energy and Sustainability Statement sets out that the construction of the building would be in excess of building regulation requirements, and this will help ensure the scheme minimises its energy impact. It also states that a solar PV array would be installed to the roof of the building which would be of sufficient size to achieve the 10% reduction stated on policy. On this basis, and subject to a condition (25) requiring the scheme to be in accordance with the submitted information, no conflict with policy CC04 arises.

Infrastructure:

43. As the proposal is for residential use, it would be liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy. This would be at a rate of £150 per square metre as it is acknowledged the proposal is for 'sheltered housing' as set out in the CIL charging schedule. On this basis, no conflict with policy CP4 of the Core Strategy arises.

Affordable Housing:

44. The proposal exceeds the threshold for providing affordable housing as per planning policy CP5 of the Core Strategy. A minimum of 30% of the total number of units (net) should be provided as affordable housing which equates to 9.3 units. In this instance, the Council considers it appropriate to require a commuted sum in-lieu of an affordable housing provision which would be £649,792.

45. A viability assessment relating to the provision of affordable housing in-lieu has been submitted. This stated that an offer of £5,620 could be made with the potential to increase this by £215,674 if it remains lawful to change ground rents. For clarity, there is current uncertainty as to whether the Government will alter rules applying to the charging of ground rents. Considering the reduced amount proposed, the assessment was independently verified by the Council's viability consultant. The consultant concluded that several factors within the assessment could be reviewed and discussed these with the applicant. It was agreed that

there was some flexibility within calculating the overall value of the site and therefore a revised offer has been made. The applicant has put forward an offer of £400,000 and this would be regardless of the change in ground rents. The viability consultant has agreed this is a reasonable offer in light of the areas that were discussed, and, on this basis, it was considered appropriate to take the application forward. For confirmation this is approximately 62% of the policy compliant amount. In terms of the overall scheme, this would be the equivalent of approximately 19% of the units being provided as affordable.

46. Whilst the new offer is below the policy compliant amount, it should be noted it is an established planning principle that developments should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The issue of viability is an established material consideration, and, in this instance, it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that the scheme would be unviable if the policy compliant amount was sought. As such, subject to the signing of a legal agreement to secure the agreed amount, the scheme, whilst not fully accord with policy CP5 of the Core Strategy, would nonetheless be acceptable in this regard.

Special Protection Area:

47. Although the site is within 7km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, the proposal does not meet the threshold require to mitigate impact upon this. As such, no contribution is required in this respect and no conflict with policy CP8 of the Core Strategy arises.

Employment Skills Plan:

48. The proposal is considered as a major development and, as per policy TB12 of the MDD Local Plan, an employment skills plan is required demonstrating how employment opportunities for local business could be provided. It is considered that either a plan detailing this, or a contribution to the Council's employment skills plan could be made but either option could be secured through a legal agreement. For clarification, the Community Infrastructure team have confirmed the contribution would be £3,750. Subject to the signing of a legal agreement, the scheme complies with policy TB12.

Archaeology:

49. In policy terms, the site is considered to have low archaeological potential given the amount of change seen in the area however, an Archaeological Assessment has been submitted. This considers that there is moderate potential for evidence dating back to the medieval period on the site but low potential for any other periods. On this basis, any further investigation could be controlled by condition. The Council's archaeologist has considered the report and agrees with the conclusions. As such, subject to a condition (4) requiring a written scheme of investigation to be agreed with the LPA, the scheme accords with policy TB25 of the MDD Local Plan.

Planning Balance:

50. The proposal would increase the provision of a particular type of housing. The need for this provision is recognised in local and national planning policy and, as such, there is accordance with the development plan in this respect. In order to achieve this, it is noted that the scheme would be large in scale and form and particularly noticeable in the immediate vicinity of the site. Nonetheless, the use

of architectural features, the breaking up of this form and certain materials would ensure that the impact on the character of the area would not be harmful and therefore the scheme is in accordance with the development plan in this respect.

51. The scheme would however have a marginal negative impact upon the setting of the adjacent listed building due to the scale and mass of the building albeit there would be no loss of historic fabric. In this sense there is a minor conflict with the NPPF and policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan which weighs against the proposal. However, this harm has been identified as less than substantial.

52. In other aspects, the scheme would be acceptable in terms of the amenity of neighbouring residents and future residents. There would be enhancement of trees and landscaping on the site and no harm would occur with regard to environmental health, ecology or archaeological matters. Subject to conditions, the proposal would not detrimentally impact in terms of highway and drainage matters.

53. As a result of a viability report, it is noted that the provision of an affordable housing contribution is reduced. Nonetheless, viability is a material consideration, and this can be a reason to overcome conflict with the development plan. As such, this is considered a minor negative element of the scheme.

54. Overall therefore, there are clear positive impacts of the scheme, not least the provision of suitable accommodation for the elderly. When this is weighed against the minor negative aspects of the impact upon the setting of a listed building and the low provision of affordable housing contribution, it is considered that the public benefits of the scheme outweigh the harm. On this basis, the scheme is recommended for approval.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. The scheme would impact upon older persons however, 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

Subject to the conditions set out in the report and the signing of a legal agreement, the scheme is, considered to accord with local and national planning policy and is therefore recommended for approval.