

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
214046	15 March 2022	Earley	Hawkedon

<b>Applicant</b>	The Owner and/or Occupier
<b>Site Address</b>	Auto Trader House and Hartman House, Danehill, Lower Earley RG6 4UT
<b>Proposal</b>	Full application for the proposed demolition of the existing office buildings (Class E(g)(i)) and the erection of 1 no. building to form a single employment unit (Flexible Class E(g)(iii), B2 and B8 use(s)) with ancillary offices, including vehicular and pedestrian access, parking, landscaping, infrastructure and associated works
<b>Type</b>	Full
<b>Officer</b>	Simon Taylor
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	Major application (>1000sqm floorspace)

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday 9 March 2022
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Place

<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>The application site is part of Cutbush Industrial Estate at Danehill in Lower Earley. It comprises two x two-storey buildings originally in mixed office and light industrial uses (most recently occupied by Auto Trader and an AV business) but which have been vacant and boarded up since 2015. Planning permission was granted at appeal in 2019 for the redevelopment of the site for 76 residential units across three buildings. Prior approval was later granted for conversion of the existing buildings for 26 residential units.</p> <p>Neither application has been implemented and there is no longer any intention to bring forward residential units on the site with the planning permission expiring in June 2022. Instead, the application involves the construction of a single industrial and logistics building in Class B and E(g) use with a footprint of about 3200sqm and car parking for 48 cars.</p> <p>There are no in-principle objections to the proposal with no objections received from the town council, ward members, surrounding residents or from internal or external consultees.</p> <p>The principle of the development is acceptable and it represents a positive redevelopment of an otherwise derelict site. The sustainability credentials for the building are BREEAM excellent. The parking and access arrangements are well designed and whilst there is a shortfall with the overall parking requirement, there is alternative transport measures and on-site infrastructure and overall support from the Council's Highways Officer. There is a net gain of full-time employment. 24-hour use is proposed to support its logistics purpose and this is acceptable on neighbour amenity grounds. There is also an acceptable landscape scheme to complement the woodland surrounds.</p> <p>No objection is raised subject to pre commencement details including construction management (Condition 3), highway construction (Conditions 4-5), EV charging (Condition 6), drainage (Condition 8), contamination (Condition 9) and landscaping</p>
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details (Conditions 10 and 11). Pre-occupation details relating to ecology (Condition 13), building sustainability (Condition 14), parking management (Condition 15), lighting (Condition 16) and deliveries (Condition 17) are also included. Conditions 22-24 also limit the Class B2 floorspace, external storage and internal floorspace on parking availability grounds.

#### **PLANNING STATUS**

- Major Development Location
- Adjoins WBC land on western and southern boundaries
- Major Accident Hazard Pipeline Buffer (SGN intermediate and high-pressure pipe to south western corner)
- M4 Air Quality Management Area (Nitrogen Dioxide NO<sub>2</sub>)
- Flood zone 1
- Localised 1 in 1000-year surface water flooding
- Public Open Space (opposite site in Danehill)
- Bat roost suitability
- Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (7km zone)
- Sand and gravel extraction consultation zone
- Non-classified road
- Adopted highway

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

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

- 1) Prior completion of a legal undertaking to secure (a) an Employment Skills Plan and (b) contributions for a Traffic Regulation Order. If the undertaking is not submitted and agreed 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**
- 2) The following conditions and informatives:**

#### **Conditions**

##### **1) Timescale**

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

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

##### **2) Approved details**

This permission is in respect of the plans numbered DR-Z-8200-P01 (dated 8 December 2021) and plans 2732-RDJWL-XX-XX-DR-A-0016, 2732-RDJWL-01-ZZ-DR-A-0025, 2732-RDJWL-01-ZZ-DR-A-0030 and 2732-RDJWL-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0035, all Rev C1, dated 8 December 2021 and received by the local planning authority on 10 December 2021 and the plan numbered 2732-RDJWL-ZZ-XX-DR-A-0020, Rev C4, dated and received on 28 February 2022. The development shall be carried out

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

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

### **3) Construction method statement and management plan**

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a revised and final Construction Method Statement and Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period and shall provide for:

- a) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- b) Loading and unloading of plant and materials
- c) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- d) The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate
- e) Wheel washing facilities
- f) Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction
- g) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works

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

### **4) Access**

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

*Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience in accordance with Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6.*

### **5) Highway construction details**

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, full details of the construction of roads and footways, including levels, widths, construction materials, depths of construction, surface water drainage and lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The roads and footways shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details to road base level before the development is occupied and the final wearing course will be provided within 3 months of occupation unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the local planning authority.

*Reason: To ensure that roads and footpaths are constructed to a standard that would be suitable for adoption as publicly maintainable highway, in the interests of providing a functional, accessible and safe development. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6.*

## **6) Electric vehicle charging**

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

*Reason: In order to ensure that secure electric vehicle charging facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

## **7) Travel Plan**

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, 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 and Core Strategy policy CP6.*

## **8) Drainage**

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, details of the drainage system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include:

- a) BRE 365 test results demonstrating whether infiltration is achievable
- b) Use of SuDS following the SuDS hierarchy, preferably infiltration
- c) Why other methods of the SuDS hierarchy cannot be implemented
- d) Groundwater monitoring confirming seasonal high groundwater levels in the area.
- e) 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 of management and maintenance of SuDS throughout the lifespan of the development

The hard surfacing hereby permitted shall be constructed from porous materials or provision shall be made to direct water run-off from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area within the curtilage of the development.

The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development and shall be maintained in the approved form for the life of the development.

*Reason: To prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15, Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.*

## **9) Phase II Intrusive Investigation**

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a Phase II Intrusive Investigation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include an investigation and assessment to identify the extent of contamination and the measures to be taken to avoid risk when the site is developed. Development shall not commence until the measures approved in the scheme have been implemented.

*Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.*

## **10) Landscaping**

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

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

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

## **11) Landscape management plan**

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, 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*

## **12) Compliance with Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan**

The development hereby permitted and other operations shall be undertaken in complete accordance with Sections 9 and 11 and Appendices 4-6 of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Method Statement & Tree Protection Plan (ref: Ref: TH 2954/C, dated 12 November 2021) prepared by Trevor Heaps Arboricultural Consultancy Ltd (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

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.

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.

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) Compliance with Ecology Impact Assessment**

The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in complete accordance with Section 5 of the Preliminary Ecological Impact Assessment (ref: 21.0148.0002.F0, dated 30 November 2021, as prepared by Ecosa (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme) and maintained thereafter.

Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, confirmation of the following shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:

- a) That the boxes, bricks or tiles have been installed, including a plan showing their location and photographs of the boxes, bricks or tiles in situ; and
- b) That permeable kick boards are installed beneath the 1.2m high fence on the western site boundary to allow free movement of mammals.

*Reason: To comply with Policy CP7 of the core strategy and Paragraphs 109 and 118 of the NPPF.*

#### **14) Carbon minimisation and BREEAM**

Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, certification that the approved development accords with the findings of the BREEAM report and Energy Statement (both prepared by JAW Sustainability and dated 9 December 2021) shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The approved measures 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.*

#### **15) Parking management strategy**

Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, a Parking Management Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Parking Management Strategy shall include details of the management of all parking spaces, site access through the security gates and the monitoring and the delivery of additional electric vehicle charging spaces when required. The car park is to be operated in accordance with the approved details for the life of the development.

*Reason: To ensure satisfactory development in the interests of amenity and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6, CP13 and CP21 and MDDLDP policies CC07 and TB20.*

#### **16) External lighting**

Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, details of external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include location, height, type, hours of operation, direction of light sources and intensity of illumination, including lux level predictions beyond the site boundary, for all external lighting strategies including details of lighting for all highways, cycleways, footpaths, public areas, non-residential buildings and residential areas beyond the site boundary. The details shall also identify those areas that support light sensitive biodiversity and the mitigation measures to be included to prevent disturbance. No further external lighting shall be installed without the written approval of the local planning authority.

*Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and highway safety and to seek to protect habitat and species of principal importance. Relevant policies: NPPF Section 15, Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP7, CP11 and MDD Policies TB21 and TB23.*

#### **17) Delivery and Servicing Plan**

Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, a revised and final Delivery and Servicing Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

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

#### **18) Parking and turning space**

No part of the building 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.*

#### **19) Cycle parking**

No part of the building hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until secure and covered parking for cycles has been provided in accordance with the approved drawings. The cycle storage shall be permanently so retained for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

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

#### **20) External materials**

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be 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: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.*



## **21) 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.*

## **22) Use limitations**

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the Class B2 use within the development hereby approved is limited to a maximum of 55% of the floorspace, unless otherwise agreed with the local planning authority.

*Reason: To encourage a mix of uses and to ensure adequate parking to serve the site. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 9 and Core Strategy Policy CP6.*

## **23) External storage**

No materials, plant, machinery, containers or equipment shall be stored on the site outside of the approved building except for the approved waste storage area shown on the approved drawings and areas for plant equipment shown on the approved drawings, including DR-Z-8200-P01 dated 8 December 2021.

*Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.*

## **24) Additional floorspace**

No additional floorspace beyond that hereby approved, including mezzanine floors, shall be constructed within the buildings hereby approved without prior written permission of the local planning authority.

*Reason: To prevent an over-development of the site and to ensure adequate parking. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

## **25) Amplification**

No sound amplifying equipment shall be installed within the exterior of the development hereby permitted.

*Reason: To safeguard the residential amenities of nearby residents from noise and disturbance. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15, Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

## **Informatives**

### **1) Section 106 agreement**

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

### **2) Pre commencement requirements**

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) Changes to the 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.

### **5) Advertisement consent**

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent that may be required for the display of advertisements on the site for which a separate Advertisement Consent application may be required. You should be aware that the display of advertisements without the necessary consent is a criminal offence liable to criminal prosecution proceedings through the courts.

### **6) Thames Water easement**

Running west to east through the rear of the site are easement and wayleaves. Thames Water properties will seek assurances that it will not be affected by the

proposed development. The applicant should contact Thames Water to discuss their proposed development in more detail. All enquiries from developers in relation to proposed developments should be made to Thames Waters Developer Services team at Thames Water Developer Services, Reading Mail Room, Rose Kiln Court, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading RG2 0BY (0800 009 3921 or [developer.services@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:developer.services@thameswater.co.uk))

## **7) 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 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 at 020 3577 9483 or [trade.effluent@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:trade.effluent@thameswater.co.uk). Application forms should be completed on line via [www.thameswater.co.uk](http://www.thameswater.co.uk). Please refer to the Wholesale; Business customers; Groundwater discharges section.

## **8) Travel plan**

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

- a) NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport)
- b) The Essential Guide to Travel Planning (DfT, March 2008)
- c) Delivering Travel Plans Through the Planning Process (DfT, April 2009)
- d) A Guide on Travel Plans for Developers (DfT)
- e) Making Residential Travel Plans Work (DfT, June 2007) All accessible at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/travelplans/>

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.

## **9) Mud on the road**

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) 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 a full pre-application process and addressing concerns relating to highway safety. 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.

## 11) Works affecting the public highway

Any works/events carried out by or on behalf of the developer affecting either a public highway or a prospectively maintainable highway (as defined under s.87 New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA)), shall be co-ordinated and licensed as required under NRSWA and the Traffic Management Act 2004 in order to minimise disruption to both pedestrian and vehicular users of the highway.

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

## 12) Service strip

The applicant's attention is drawn to the presence of a c.2m wide service strip running adjacent to the surfaced roadway. The service strip forms part of the adopted public highway. It is an offence for any works to be undertaken within this service strip without express permission in writing from the highway authority. The Head of Technical Services at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham (0118 9746000) must be contacted for the approval of any such works.

<b>PLANNING HISTORY</b>		
<b>App No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Decision/Date</b>
16170	Industrial estate (outline)	Approved 2 March 1982
18652	Retail, offices, parking and open space (outline)	Refused 13 January 1983
22395	Industrial building for design testing and assembly of electronic equipment with car parking (not implemented)	Approved 18 October 1984
26694	Industrial building for mixed use research, development, light industrial, offices and storage, with car parking	Approved 17 December 1986
30051	Change of use from mixed use to Class B1 industrial	Approved 13 April 1988
34823	Bike shelter, store and car parking	Approved 8 January 1990
F/2001/4181	Change of use from light industrial to offices	Approved 12 September 2001
CLE/2011/1047	Use of site for Class B1 office use	Approved 16 June 2011
OFF/2015/0882	Conversion of offices to 25 residential flats (prior approval)	Withdrawn 14 May 2015
162247	Flat building comprising 126 units, car parking and landscaping	Refused 23 December 2016
W/17/3174392	Appeal against refusal of 162247	Dismissed 1 December 2017

173675	Flat building comprising 76 units, car parking and landscaping	Refused 15 May 2018
W/18/3205448	Appeal against refusal of 173675	Upheld 7 June 2019
190326	Conversion of offices to 26 residential flats (prior approval)	Approved 14 March 2019

<b>SUMMARY INFORMATION</b>		
	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Site Area	0.81 hectares	
Land use	Offices	Mixed industrial, storage and offices
Units	2 x two-storey office buildings	One storey warehouse with mezzanine
Floorspace	3,048m <sup>2</sup>	3,692m <sup>2</sup>
Height	6.2m and 9.0m	13.0m
Employment	0 (vacant site)	52 full time
Parking spaces	116 spaces	48 spaces + 5 motorcycle spaces + 5 HGV loading bays
Cycle spaces	0 spaces	26 spaces

<b>CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>	
<b>Internal</b>	
Drainage	No objection, subject to Condition 8 requiring final drainage details and confirmation of capacity (see Thames Water comment below).
Highways	No objection, subject to finalised design details relating to access onto Danehill, electric vehicle charging, construction, parking management and deliveries, as specified in Conditions 4, 5, 15 and 17 respectively.
Landscape and Trees	No objection, subject to a landscape management plan and revised landscaping details in Conditions 10 and 11. Tree protection is acceptable, as conditioned in Condition 12.
Growth and Delivery	Whilst the loss of residential housing is unfortunate, there is no in-principle objection to the employment scheme.
Economic Growth	No objection, subject to delivery of an Employment Skills Plan, as secured by s106 agreement.
Property Services	No comments received.
Environmental Health	No comments received.
Ecology	No comments received.
Waste	No comments received.
<b>External</b>	
Thames Water	No objection in relation to wastewater and foul water capacity. Sequential tests should be used in dealing with on-site drainage. Easements run through the site. Informatives 6 and 7 are applicable.
Southern Gas	No objection.
SEE Power	No objection.
Health and Safety Executive	No objection.
Fire and Rescue	No objection.
Crime Prevention	No comments received.

<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	
Earley Town Council	No objection.
Ward Members	No comments received.
Neighbours	<p>One submission was received from Unit 1, Cutbush Court, Lower Earley RG6 4UW. It noted support of the application as an improvement from the current eyesore. Double yellow lines are suggested to assist in visibility and access on Danehill.</p> <p>The access will be remodelled and the double yellow lines extended to improve turning into and from the site. Beyond this, it is not considered that the double yellow lines be extended given that it would compromise the availability of on-street car parking, which is already very limited during working hours. The levels of parking and traffic from this development does not warrant such a restriction along the whole length of Danehill.</p>

<b>APPLICANTS POINTS</b>
<p>Nodia Properties RR Ltd and Aydevan Developers Ltd are proposing a high-quality employment development on existing brownfield land, which will assist with the regeneration of a site that has a long history of health and safety issues. The scheme will provide a number of jobs and will meet an unmet need for industrial and logistics in Wokingham. The development will also assist Wokingham in attracting a number of industrial and logistics businesses in the future.</p> <p>Having regard to the three dimensions of delivering sustainable development, the application proposal will perform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an economic role – developing and supporting the applicant and their investment in industrial and logistics both in Wokingham and the UK;</li> <li>• a social role – providing a high quality built and natural environment, including the enhancement of the landscape grounds and creating a number of new jobs; and</li> <li>• an environmental role – contributing to and protecting the natural environment by providing a net gain in biodiversity, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.</li> </ul> <p>Overall, the development proposal complies with national and local planning policies and achieves sustainable development in line with NPPF Paragraph 11. For the reasons set out in this Statement and in the documents supporting this planning application, we ask the Council to support the applicants project programme and to grant planning permission without delay.</p>

<b>PLANNING POLICY</b>		
National Planning Policy Framework	Section 6	Building a strong, competitive economy
	Section 9	Promoting sustainable transport
	Section 12	Achieving well-designed places
	Section 15	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP2	Inclusive Communities

Core Strategy 2010	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP4	Infrastructure Requirements
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP8	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP15	Employment Development
	CP17	Housing Delivery
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	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
	TB11	Core Employment Areas
	TB12	Employment Skills Plan
	TB20	Service Arrangements and Deliveries for Employment and Retail Use
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
	TB24	Designated Heritage Assets
SPDs	BDG	Borough Design Guide
	SDC SPD	Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

## PLANNING ISSUES

### Description of Development

1. The proposal involves the following:

- Demolition of the two existing buildings
- Construction of a single industrial and logistics building with Class B use and a floor area of 3232sqm with an additional 528sqm of mezzanine office floorspace
- Car parking for 48 cars (including eight EV parking spaces and four disabled spaces)
- Five loading bays at the rear of the site
- Modified entrance from Danehill and new access along the south eastern boundary
- Cycle storage and bin storage
- Associated landscaping (including removal and replacement of trees) and site works
- 24-hour operation

### Description of Site

2. Auto Trader House and Hartman House are two separate two storey office buildings located to the southern side of Danehill in the Cutbush Core Employment Area. The

buildings have remained vacant since 2015 and the site is well boarded and shows clear signs of disuse. The collective footprint is approximately 1610sqm. Other warehouses and office buildings (some of which have been converted to residential units) predominate to the east with residential housing in the north and east and Lower Earley Way and the M4 motorway corridor with countryside beyond to the south. A dense coverage of trees adjoin the Council owned land to the west and along the southern boundary.

### **Principle of Development**

3. The site is located within the built-up area of Earley in an area identified as a major development location. Development in this location is acceptable in principle providing, it is of an appropriate scale and character and accords with the relevant policies set out in the NPPF and Development Plan, including with respect to employment floorspace, loss of residential dwellings and use of brownfield land.

### **Employment use**

4. Policy CP15 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB11 of the MDD Local Plan permit business, industry or warehousing (employment development) in Core Employment Areas (CEAs) and refurbishment or redevelopment of existing buildings in employment use outside of CEAs. Employment development inside development limits but outside the identified CEAs are assessed against policy CP15 of the Core Strategy. There should not be a net loss of Class B floorspace.
5. The Danehill area immediately to the east accommodates a number of business uses (with some office to residential conversions under Class O of Part 3 of the GPDO) but the site is not identified as a CEA. However, given the previous employment (office) use within the site and the wider setting of the Cutbush Industrial Estate as well as its proximity to the M4 motorway, there is no objection is raised to the redevelopment of the site as an industrial and/or logistical warehouse building broadly within the scope of use class B2, B8 and E(g). There is also a net increase of 644sqm floorspace which is supportive of policy.

### **Loss of residential**

6. Policy CP3(i) of the Core Strategy requires that proposals do not lead to a net loss of dwellings and other residential accommodation or land. Additionally, whilst it carries little weight, Policy H4 of the Draft Local Plan states that *“Given the pressures to build more homes under national planning policy, it is important that existing housing and land that has permission for new housing is protected from being lost to other use, unless there is clear justification for such a loss.”*
7. The site benefits from planning permission (173675, approved at appeal APP/X0360/W/18/3205448) for the redevelopment of the site for 76 residential dwellings across three separate buildings and with a unit mix of 53 x 1-bed, 21 x 2-bed and two x 3-bed dwellings. The application will expire on 7 June 2022 and the statements in the Planning Statement are clear that there is no intention to deliver on this permission. A prior approval for 26 dwellings was issued 14 March 2019 but the provisions of the GPDO require that the development be completed by 14 March 2022. This is clearly not occurring.



8. The applicant's reasoning for not implementing the residential permission relates to viability, including that the employment scheme is more appropriate in this location with links to the M4.
9. Whilst the proposal would remove 76 dwellings from the deliverable Housing Land Supply, it is recognised that the existing use is for offices and that the site is not a proposed housing allocation within the emerging Local Plan. It is also accepted that despite the lack of concrete justification, there is currently no appetite for a residential scheme to be delivered.
10. There is no policy objection for the employment use given the previous employment use of the site and within the wider Cutbush Industrial Estate. The proposal would provide additional industrial/warehousing floorspace, for which there is an identified need within the Borough.

#### Brownfield land

11. Paragraph 120(c) of the NPPF requires the Council to give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.
12. The site currently lies derelict and the two buildings are in significant disrepair with debris and evidence of squatting and vandalism in recent years. The reuse of the land has already been established with an extant permission, granted at appeal, for the erection of 76 residential flats. The subject application involves an alternate but acceptable proposal to regenerate the site, with soft landscaping and tree planting.

#### Site sustainability

13. Policies CP6 and CP9 of the Core Strategy permit development where it is based on sustainable credentials in terms of access to local facilities and services and the promotion of sustainable transport. The site offers good links with the M4 and is supportive of a distribution or logistical hub. It is within walking distance of public transport and services and facilities and is in a highly sustainable location. Because of the 24-hour use, there will remain a relatively high dependence and there is some evidence of poor parking management on Danehill.
14. A draft Travel Plan (Velocity Transport Planning Ltd, 7 December 2021) was submitted in support of sustainability measures. It includes details of the coordinator, MyJourney, efforts to take advantage of the good local bus services, measures to assist in reducing road traffic and congestion and the health benefits of walking and cycling and an initial action plan. A final Travel Plan will require details of the surveys after occupation, details of showers and lockers for cyclists and a forward budget. See Condition 7.

## Character of the Area

### Landscape and visual impact assessment

15. The site lies on the settlement edge with the woodland to the south and west designated as countryside. Ordinarily a transition of built form would be required but it is also recognised that Lower Earley Way and the M4 are dominant features in the landscape.
16. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Harper Landscape Architecture, December 2021) was submitted in support of the application. This has been reviewed by the Council's Trees and Landscape Officer.
17. The landscape character is assessed as low-medium slightly higher than the report, as a result of the existing landscape buffer to the west and surroundings areas of woodland and open space. Within the site, it is poor. The magnitude of impact from construction is agreed as low adverse at construction and low or beneficial post construction. The visual impact is noted in Section 8 as:

*"The significant strengthened screening planting located along the Site's existing boundaries and the City Limits Office building, would visually contain the development so that it continues to be located in a visually discreet position. All the public views of the development would be near distance and predominantly from within the Cutbush Industrial Estate, although there would be glimpsed views from the pavement following the busy Lower Earley Way and towards the entrance area from Cutbush Lane. All the public views would be partial, obscured, contained or framed."*



18. The Council's Trees Officer agrees that the site is 'visually contained' by the topography and adjacent planting and built form within the commercial setting. The proposed landscaping screens and uses a good palette of native and ornamental plants. However, there is heavy reliance on the assumed perpetuity of the woodland screening directly to the west of the site.

#### Built form and siting

19. 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 Borough Design Guide SPD outlines similar guidelines:
- NR1 states development should respond to key characteristics and features
  - NR2 states that proposals should improve the area
  - NR3 requires a positive arrival impression for all modes of transport
  - NR4 requires that buildings address the street
  - NR9 states that large floorplates must be designed to minimise potential impact upon the character of the area
  - NR10 states that car parking is to be unobtrusive and landscaped
  - NR11 requires that servicing be screened
  - P2 aims to ensure that parking is provided in a manner that is compatible with the local character
20. The existing footprint of Hartman House and Auto Trader House is 1610sqm which fits comfortably on the site. The subject proposal has a footprint of 3200sqm which is 100% larger than existing and 40% of the site. The floorplate of the proposed building is substantial on its own. Another 3390sqm or 43% is made up of hard surfacing for the car park, turning, access road and pedestrian connectivity. About 17% would be made up of existing and proposed soft landscaping and trees.
21. Nonetheless, there is no in-principle objection to the large floorplate or the overall bulk and scale of the building. The servicing area is also well screened to the rear and the front elevation provides an inviting and clear presentation to Danehill, including the use of glazing.



## Height

22. NR5 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that height, bulk, and massing should respond to the local context and the prevailing heights in the area. NR7 requires that roofs be designed to the context of the area, including visibility.



23. The height measures 13m with a parapet concealing the 11.2m eaves height and 12.8m ridge height. This is of significant height and is reinforced by the large footprint. However, it is sited 40m from the street frontage and partially concealed by City Limits building on the site to the north and this reduces its dominance. In the context of existing landscaping, which extends to 16m in height, the building will remain relatively well screened from wider views in the vicinity of Lower Earley Way to the south and the dense woodland to the west largely removes any impression of the building.

## Parking

24. P2 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that parking is compatible with the local character and NR10 requires that it is to be unobtrusive and landscaped. There is a modest public car park to the front of the site where it is sufficiently complemented by existing and proposed landscaping. A larger car park and loading area dominates the rear of the site but there is adequate boundary planting in areas and it is well screened by existing woodland across the boundary.

## Materials

25. NR8 of the Borough Design Guide requires high quality and simple materials and components. The palette includes silver and dark grey cladding to the walls and roof (with rooflights) and extensive glazing to the front elevation. These are acceptable materials in the locality and in contrast to the dense woodland to the rear. Materials form Condition 20.

## External lighting

26. Paragraph 185(c) of the NPPF aims to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes, and nature conservation. To protect against undue glare from night time use and for wildlife in surrounding woodland, a lighting plan forms Condition 16.

## Boundary Treatments

27. NR12 of the Borough Design Guide requires consideration of boundary treatments. There is little change to the boundary fencing. Some security fencing is shown around the service yard and to the side access road. It consists of steel materials



with views through and to a height of 2m. This is appropriate in the context of the site.

### **Accessibility (incorporating The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010))**

28. The Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or belief. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy also seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities.
29. The development includes lift access, accessible toilet and shower facilities to the ground floor, level access to the building, an open plan with good circulation and four disabled car spaces (8% of total provision) at the front of the building. On this basis, no concerns are raised.

### **Neighbour Amenity**

30. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity and Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact.
31. The siting and scale of the building and its site context within Cutbush Industrial Area as well as its relationship with its nearest residential neighbours is such that there is no adverse outcome in terms of dominance, loss of visual privacy or loss of light. There is 7.5m separation to City Limits to the north and 11.8m to the property to the south west, both of which are considered sufficient for building separation. There are no foreseeable overlooking concerns given the separation distances and intended use.
32. The proposal seeks 24-hour operation to support its intended logistics role on the edge of the M4 and an Acoustic Assessment (Auricl Acoustic Consulting, 30 November 2021) was submitted in support of the application.
33. The assessment considered noise sources associated with delivery vehicles, internal activities and plant and included the findings of background noise level on the north western boundary (the boundary closest to the established residential area and furthest from the M4). The nearest residential receiver is about 60m to the north. It is based on the assessment of ten day and two-night HGV movements to and from the site.
34. With high levels of traffic noise from Lower Earley Way and the M4, the background noise level was 52dB in the daytime and 43dB in the night-time. The noise levels for the operation for plant can be mitigated and conditioned without any constraints. The internal operations of the facility are well below the background noise level (28dB during the day and 19dB during the night). The vehicle movements to and from the site are slightly higher but remain below the background noise level (10dB in the day and 2db in the evening) though this does not account for movements within the surrounding road network. Cumulatively, levels remain below the background noise level and the impact is low.

35. A review of other buildings at Cutbush has not found any permissions with restricted hours of use but this could be because of the historic nature of the original development of the wider site and the relatively low intensity of the uses taking place on the site that have not necessitated any restrictive conditions. With favourable conclusions in the acoustic assessment, there is no reason to oppose 24-hour operation of the facility.
36. Plant areas have not been specified but it appears likely that any such plant would be located at the rear. There are no in-principle objections given the levels of separation to neighbouring areas and when accounting for background noise levels.
37. There is sufficient separation to neighbouring buildings and tree coverage to ensure that there is no unreasonable spillage of light to neighbouring properties.

## **Access and Movement**

### Parking

38. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street parking standards, including provision for charging facilities. For an employment use, the car parking requirement varies between one space per 25sqm up to one space per 200sqm so the overall parking requirement is largely dependent upon the end use.
39. The proposed development involves a flexible employment use of 3,692sqm within a single unit comprising a mix of class E(g)), B2 and/or B8 uses with mezzanine office space. 48 car spaces are proposed, which is the equivalent of 1 space/79sqm. Whilst there is a large amount of storage and distribution floorspace, there would on average, need to be at least 53 spaces.
40. A Transport Statement (Velocity Transport Planning Ltd, 7 December 2021) was submitted in support of the planning application. TRICS data from acceptable sites has been used to assess the parking utilisation of this land use. These results illustrated that between 11am and 1pm, there would only be one space left (98% capacity) which may lead to overspill parking. The Employment Density Guide 3<sup>rd</sup> edition was then used to determine the number of workers, resulting in a range of employees of between 103 and 50 employees. The 2011 Census Journey to Work data for this area was used which indicated that 67% of workers travelled to work by car. The proposed trips have been assessed and would not have an adverse impact on the highway network.
41. The end use distribution is not yet confirmed and the applicant has advised that if the user of the site proposed more B2 use then there is potential for converting the loading bays to parking areas. Due to the location of the site with sustainable transport options as well as the travel plan, the level of parking is acceptable subject to a planning condition to limit the use as B2 to a percentage of the total site (55%). The Council's Highways Officer accepts that B2 use would require less loading space and this area can be converted to further parking.
42. There will be four disabled bays which is in line with standards. They are located appropriately at the front entrance in a publicly accessible area. Five motorcycle

(PTW) spaces are proposed at the rear, which exceeds the standards. Each space will be 5m x 2.5m in dimension in accordance with the Council's requirements.

43. Cycle parking comprises 26 parking spaces (18 long term at the rear and 8 short term at the front of the site) in two separate covered and secured sheds at the front and rear of the site. This exceeds the minimum standard by eight spaces and is acceptable. Details are conditioned in Condition 19.
44. Eight active electric vehicle charging spaces are proposed – four to the front and four to the rear. This exceeds the minimum requirements of 5% active and 5% passive spaces. Details will be secured by Condition 6.

#### Access

45. A Road Safety Audit Stage 1 was submitted which was reviewed and found to be acceptable. Remodelling of the main entrance onto Danehill is required to ensure improved access onto the site. Double yellow lines are required on Danehill to aid with turning. A contribution in a s106 to fund the TRO process and deliver the yellow lines is required.
46. Swept paths show that there is suitable access for cars (into the car spaces), a 17.5m articulated vehicle and 10m rigid truck (to the loading bays) and a refuse vehicle.
47. Separate pedestrian access via a dedicated footpath provides access from Danehill to the main entrance and to the rear of the site, which is a positive aspect. Lighting is required in Condition 16.

#### Deliveries

48. A framework Delivery and Servicing Plan (Velocity Transport Planning Ltd, 7 December 2021) was submitted in support of the planning application. Access will ultimately be via Lower Earley Way. Five loading bays at the rear of the site are future proofed for longer semi-trailers. TRICS calculations anticipate 31 two-way car and LGV movements between 8-9am and 22 two-way movements between 5-6pm. HGV movements are estimated at 7 two-way movements between 8-9pm.
49. The details are to the satisfaction of the Council's Highways Officer although the final document would need to be amended to ensure deliveries are outside the peak hours wherever possible. This is noted in Condition 17.

#### Construction

50. A framework Construction Logistics Plan (Velocity Transport Planning Ltd, 7 December 2021) was submitted in support of the planning application. It is likely that there will be up to 12 HGV movements are likely with routing via Lower Earley Way from the west but is subject to final agreement, The final document needs to include a compound plan, cycle and car parking, wheel washing and street sweeping, use of banksmen to manage deliveries and construction vehicle movement. This is noted in Condition 3.

## **Landscaping and Trees**

51. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, retain existing trees, and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.
52. There are no protected trees on the site, there is good woodland coverage to the west and south of the site, providing a visual and audible buffer between the site and Lower Earley Way and the M4.
53. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement (Trevor Heaps Consulting, 12 November 2021) was submitted with the application. Four Category B trees and three Category C trees and two Category C shrubs are proposed for removal, either to accommodate the remodelled entrance to the site or within the footprint of the proposed building. None of the trees are higher than 8m in height and six of the trees lie behind the City Limits building and have limited contribution to the streetscene. The setback to the north-west side allows for the retention of Trees T18 and T19 although their canopies are against the building. The layout of the car park also allows for the retention of Trees T21, 22 and 23 in the south western corner. The retention of the additional trees is welcomed by the Council's Trees Officer but being close to hard landscape features such as within the car park, an amelioration strategy to improve their growing environment is required in a Landscape Management Plan in Condition 11.
54. A Landscape Plan was included in the documentation with a good scheme mixing native and some ornamental species that will encourage biodiversity. Several additional opportunities are identified, including widening the planting bed south eastern boundary to Cutbush Court, thereby allowing further tree and hedge/shrub screening to this otherwise open boundary and to the north of the site around the City Limits building (as noted in the LVIA). To the eastern side of the access road, amendments to the scheme to provide a 1.0m wide planting buffer along the boundary provides some improvement and strengthening of the landscape buffer between the site and Cutbush Court to the east. Revised and finalised details form Condition 10.
55. A staff amenity space is provided to the north side of the building. It will receive some morning sun but will be in shade for most of the day. This is likely to lead to underutilisation as an outdoor space for staff. Nonetheless, it is not a strict departure from any policies and guidelines and whilst unfortunate, it does not warrant refusal of the application.

## **Ecology**

56. 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.
57. A Preliminary Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosa, 30 November 2021) was submitted in support of the application. It included a desktop and field survey. The site comprises two vacant office buildings partially located within habitat where bat roosts have previously been found. The site is bordered by a small plantation woodland to the north and west.



58. Because of the dilapidated state of the buildings (no roof, broken windows) and the extensive hardstanding and poor quality of the site conditions, including vegetation, there is low suitability for roosting bats and suitability for foraging and commuting bats, hazel dormouse, breeding birds, reptiles and European hedgehog. The woodland to the north and west of the site provides better quality habitat and requires consideration in the design of the scheme.
59. Mitigation and compensation measures include the provision of native planting, preparation of sensitive timing of works, hooded luminaires to external lighting (where unavoidable) and working methods and provision of nesting boxes. Vegetation clearance works should be undertaken outside the main breeding bird season of March to August and caution is required when removing grassland to protect hedgehogs and reptiles. Enhancement recommendations include additional roosting and nesting features for bats in the form of two bat boxes and five bird boxes. Additionally, the Council has sought new or retained permeable kick boards beneath the 1.2m high fence on the western site boundary to allow free movement of mammals. Mitigation and enhancement details form Condition 13.

### **Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area**

60. The subject property is located within 7km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area but the scope of the works is minor whereby there will be no foreseeable impact upon the SPA. The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy.

### **Building Sustainability**

61. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD require sustainable design and conservation. In addition, 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.
62. A BREEAM report (JAW Sustainability, 9 December 2021) was submitted in support of the application. The BREEAM considerations include management, health and wellbeing, energy, transport, water, materials, waste, land Use and ecology, pollution and innovation. The report suggests that an excellent rating (71.09%) can be achieved, which is a positive aspect to the development. BREEAM compliance is outlined in Condition 14.
63. An Energy and Sustainability Statement (JAW Sustainability, 9 December 2021) was also submitted with the application. The development incorporates passive design measures (efficient building fabric, insulated walls and high efficiency glazing), energy efficient equipment (efficient VRF heating system in the office and reception areas) and renewable energy (PV panels, air source heat pumps). Overall, the development demonstrates a 44% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions over the building regulations notional building and a 55.5% CO<sub>2</sub> savings, well in excess of the 10% standard in Policy CC05. Finalised outcomes are required as part of Condition 14.

## **Employment Skills**

64. Policy TB12 of the MDD Local Plan requires an employment skills plan (ESP) with a supporting method statement for major development such as the subject application. It is intended to provide opportunities for training, apprenticeship, or other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills required by developers, contractors, or end users of the proposal.
65. Based on the total floorspace, the employment skills plan would generate a need for five community skills support positions (eg work experience or CSCS training courses), two apprenticeships and two jobs. If for any reason, the obligation is not delivered, a contribution in lieu totalling £15,000 is required. This is based on the cost of the Council supporting the employment outcomes of the plan.
66. Measures to secure this arrangement form part of a section 106 legal agreement. The applicants/owners are bound by the planning obligation and are required to provide an estimated start on site date and a build duration.

## **Crime Prevention**

67. Paragraphs 92 and 130 of the NPPF are supportive of designs that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
68. The Crime Prevention Officer at Thames Valley Police have not responded to the consultation. Broadly, there are no in-principle objections. The main entrance is clear, legible and inviting, the service area is securely fenced and cycle storage is at the rear where it is securely located and sited where there is good visibility and surveillance. Details of access through the secure gates form part of the Delivery Logistics Plan in Condition 15.

## **Waste Storage**

69. A refuse and recycling area is shown at the rear of the building. It measures 32sqm (10m x 3.2m), is open air and consists of timber boarding. It is acceptable in terms of compatibility within the site and ease of collection given the circulation space at the rear of the site. A swept path shows that there is suitable access and turning within the site for a refuse vehicle.

## **Flooding and Drainage**

70. Section 15 of the NPPF and Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding and Policy CC10 of the MDD Local Plan requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow.
71. A Flood Risk Assessment, SuDS and Drainage Strategy (Idom, 2 December 2021) was submitted in support of the application. The site is within flood zone 1 but there is a low risk of surficial flooding which, the FRA suggests, would imply existing problems with the highway drainage network.

72. There is no significant change to the extent of impermeable surfacing across the site. The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed the scheme and raises no objection. Q100 for the existing site is 173.4L/s but discharge from the development will be limited at Q1 (59l/s) via a hydro-brake. Attenuation is proposed to cater for the 1 in 100-year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change, with a storage volume of 122.5cubic metres. However, the calculations indicate that 124.5cubic metres is required. To address this shortfall, Condition 8 requires further details.
73. Both foul and surface water discharge are proposed into Thames Water systems to the north of the site.

### **Air Quality**

74. Paragraphs 174, 185 and 186 of the NPPF seek to ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment. This is reinforced in Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy.
75. The southern part of the site is within the M4 Air Quality Management Area, which would also be affected by traffic on Lower Earley Way and the M4. An Air Quality Assessment (Air Quality Consultants Ltd, December 2021) was submitted with the application. It concluded that development-generated traffic flows on the local road network will be below relevant published screening criteria and that the overall operational air quality effects of the proposed development are judged to be 'not significant'. No specific mitigation is necessary.

### **Contamination**

76. Paragraph 183 of the NPPF requires that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination.
77. The last planning permission for 76 units included a condition for a scheme of remediation for the residential use. this condition was not discharged but a desktop Phase 1 Environmental Assessment (Idom, 1 December 2021) was submitted with the application. It concluded a low to moderate risk of significant contamination arising from potential asbestos in building materials, demolition rubble and piles of debris and fly tipping. A recommendation for a Phase II Intrusive Investigation to determine the appropriate foundations for future development. This forms Condition 9.

### **CONCLUSION**

78. The site is well suited for its proposed logistics use and the derelict nature of the site is in need of redevelopment. The proposal represents a functional and well-planned outcome for the site with excellent sustainability credentials and which brings job creation. A lack of onsite car parking has been justified, the loss of residential dwellings as part of the extant planning permission is unfortunate but accepted. 24-hour use is appropriate on neighbour amenity grounds. Conditional approval is recommended.

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