

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
220663	18 November 2022	Sonning	Sonning

Applicant	Arlington Retirement Lifestyles
Site Address	Land South of Old Bath Road, Sonning RG4 6GQ
Proposal	Outline planning application for the proposed erection of 57 dwellings suitable for older persons accommodation following demolition of the existing dwellings (Access, Layout, Scale and Appearance to be considered).
Type	Outline
Officer	Andrew Chugg
Reason for determination by committee	Major application approval

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 9 November 2022
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place and Growth

RECOMMENDATION	<p>That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:</p> <p>A. Completion of a legal agreement pursuant to section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure the provision of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) An index-linked commuted payment towards affordable housing in the borough, 2) Deferred payment mechanism for a further affordable housing commuted payment should the profitability of the scheme allow it, 3) An index-linked commuted payment for the provision of an Employment Skills Plan (ESP), 4) Provision of a Travel Plan to promote alternative forms of transport to and from the site, other than by the private car, 5) Occupation of the units hereby approved shall be limited to where one or more of the proposed occupants of each dwelling is over 60 years of age, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority; and 6) Extant planning permission 190693 to be revoked on implementation of 220663.
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SUMMARY

- The principle of delivery of private C3 units on this existing ‘within settlement’ housing site is acceptable in principle in planning terms. The proposals would demolish the three existing properties on the site and provide a new retirement development with some 57 x 1 and 2-bedroom flats in three separate blocks:
 - Block A in north-eastern corner - 3 x 1-bedroom flats plus 16 x 2-bedroom flats,
 - Block B in south-eastern corner - 3 x 1-bedroom flats plus 15 x 2-bedroom flats, and
 - Block C in south-western corner - 2 x 1-bedroom flats plus 18 x 2-bedroom flats.

A small staff office and reception area are also proposed in Block A with another office and communal lounge proposed in Block B.

- Outline planning permission (201833) and reserved matters approval (213022) have already been granted for an earlier iteration of this scheme also for 57 units. The outline permission 201833 secured policy compliant commuted financial contributions towards affordable housing and employment skills via a s106 legal agreement. However, the applicant has reassessed the viability of the scheme and advises that it is no longer able to remain financially viable with the affordable housing contribution previously secured. Hence, a nominal ‘up front’ commuted payment of £100,000 towards affordable housing is now proposed with scope to secure further contributions via a deferred payment mechanism, should viability improve.
- The outline application for which this submission relates initially included alterations to provide a secondary access serving Block A and revised parking provision arrangements. However, following concerns raised by officers in respect of excessive hardstanding, the applicant has since reverted to the same layout as approved under 201833. Hence, in physical terms, the current proposal only varies from the extant permission in that relatively minor alterations are now proposed to the internal floorplans of the residential flats and four additional parking spaces are proposed. Only ‘Landscaping’ is reserved for consideration at a later stage.
- The housing numbers, mix and compliance with NDSS remains as per the approved scheme.
- The scheme would provide residents with self-contained and secure accommodation and enable residents to lead a lifestyle as independent as possible but with a level of care available on site tailored to meet their specific, individual needs. The applicant has advised that level of care would be adjusted as resident needs change over time.
- In the same manner as the extant permission 201833, the proposed development would provide an appropriate transition in height and scale between the substantially larger Sunrise Nursing Home building and Redgrave when viewed from Old Bath Road. The proposal would also provide suitable separation between blocks in order that it respects the overall character and appearance of the surrounding area, including views to and from the countryside to the south.

- Sufficient separation distances would be retained between the proposed blocks to protect the residential amenity of residents that occupy the existing dwellings located adjacent to the application site.
- Adequate parking provision would be provided commensurate with the specific type of the development and likely lower car ownership levels. There are no highway safety concerns relating to the development.
- Adequate surface water drainage measures have been provided with this application and further required details in respect of landscaping, ecology, sustainable design, archaeology or environmental health issues can be secured either under the Reserved Matters and/or via the recommended conditions.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Proposal	Decision
213022	<i>'Land South of Old Bath Road Sonning'</i> : Reserved Matters application pursuant to Outline planning permission 201833 with Appearance and landscaping reserved for the proposed 57 dwellings suitable for older persons accommodation (Use Class C3) with consideration of means of access, layout and scale to be determined. Following demolition of existing dwellings. (Appearance and Landscaping to be considered.)	APPROVED – 07 Jan 2022
201833	<i>'Land South of Old Bath Road Sonning'</i> : Outline application with Appearance and landscaping reserved for the proposed 57 dwellings suitable for older persons accommodation (Use Class C3) with consideration of means of access, layout and scale to be determined. Following demolition of existing dwellings.	APPROVED subject to s106 – 30 July 2021
200354	<i>'Red Lodge and side garden of 'The Range'</i> : Full application for the proposed erection of 7no. detached residential dwellings with garages, widening of the existing access road, plus associated works on land currently comprising 'Red Lodge' and part of the garden of the adjacent property 'The Range', following demolition of 'Red Lodge'.	WITHDRAWN - 16 April 2020
190693	<i>'The Lawns'</i> : Full planning application for the proposed erection of a 1no. dwelling including landscaping.	APPROVED – 26 Nov 2019
182797	<i>'The Lawns'</i> : Full planning application for the proposed erection of a 1no. dwelling including landscaping.	REFUSED – 25 Feb 2019
171424	<i>'Red Lodge and 'The Range'</i> : Full planning application for the demolition of two existing dwellings and the erection six replacement dwellings (net gain of four), garages and ancillary landscaping accessed of the existing drive including landscaping.	APPROVED – 26 April 2018

122418	<i>'The Range'</i> : Proposed erection of single storey side and rear extensions plus change of pitched roof to flat roof terrace on rear elevations, and conversion of garage to habitable room and erection of triple detached garage.	WITHDRAWN – 12 March 2012
082164	<i>'The Range'</i> : Proposed single storey side and rear extensions plus change pitched roof to flat roof terrace on side elevation, conversion of garage to habitable rooms and erection of triple detached garage with rear and front dormer windows at first floor level.	WITHDRAWN – 22 May 2008
081776	<i>'The Range'</i> : Proposed erection of single storey side and rear extensions plus change pitched roof to flat roof terrace on rear elevations conversion of garage to habitable room and erection of triple detached garage.	APPROVED – 04 Nov 2008
071462	<i>'The Range'</i> : Proposed single storey side and rear extensions plus first floor rear terraces with spiral staircase and conversion of garages to habitable rooms. Erection of 2-storey linked detached triple garage with habitable space at first floor level and front and rear dormer windows.	REFUSED – 17 Oct 2007

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION	
Site Area	1.18ha
Proposed units	57 (49 no. 2-bed flats and 8 no. 1-bed flats)
Proposed density - dwellings/hectare	48 dwellings per hectare (DPH)
Number of affordable units proposed	Nil
Previous land use	Residential ('Red Lodge', 'The Lawns' and 'The Range')
Existing parking spaces	Exceeds requirements for three dwellings
Proposed parking spaces	67 car and 12 cycle parking spaces
PLANNING CONSTRAINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited Development Location (Countryside directly to the south/rear of the site) • Affordable Housing Thresholds • Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Model • Tree Preservation Orders • SSSI Impact Risk Zones • Green Routes and Riverside Paths Consultation Zone • Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Zone (mostly 1 in 1,000-year extent) • Minerals Site Consultation Area • Replacement Mineral Local Plan
CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Internal: WBC Highways	No objection subject to conditions

WBC Landscape & Trees	No objection subject to conditions
WBC Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions
WBC Drainage	No objection subject to conditions
WBC Ecology	No objection subject to conditions
WBC Housing Policy Officer	No objection subject to securing an index-linked financial contribution in-lieu of 40% affordable housing.
WBC Economic Development Project Officer	No objection subject to an Employment Skills Plan or a financial contribution in lieu being secured via s106.
WBC Education	No objection
External: Berkshire Archaeology	No objection subject to conditions
Natural England	No comment
Thames Water	No objection with regard waste-water network or sewage treatment
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue	Commented that the proposal would impose an additional burden on the Fire Authority's existing infrastructure. Fire hydrants would need to be located within 90m of each block proposed.
TVP Crime Prevention Design Officer	Concerns raised over dual vehicular entrance to the site, parking levels and areas for improvement highlighted re internal compartmentation of unit, bins/buggy store security details.

REPRESENTATIONS

Sonning Parish Council (refer to Appendix 4 for full comments):

- Proposal is overly dense in contrast with its low-density surroundings on the edge of settlement.
- Site is not in a sustainable location and doesn't have easy access to shops, Doctors surgery or Post Office.
- Adverse impact on highway safety; esp. elderly residents and cyclists wanting to cross the A4.
- Additional burden on medical services due to the aged population it would serve.
- Loss of trees and mature hedges would result in further opportunities for overlooking and detriment to privacy of neighbours.
- Concern that the scheme is now deemed to be financially unviable by the applicant.

Local Members: Cllr. Firmager objects on the following grounds:

- Proposal is overdevelopment and out of character with the area
- Adverse impact on already congested roads especially on match days at the nearby rugby club
- Site is served by infrequent bus links and is a long way from local amenities.

Neighbours: 29 objections received from neighbours, Rt. Hon Theresa May MP (Maidenhead) and Sonning & Sonning Eye Society:

- The proposal amounts to a cramped overdevelopment of the site and would have an unacceptable urbanising impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- The scale, massing and nature of the development is out of character with surrounding properties.
- Inadequate car parking for residents and visitors proposed.
- Insufficient existing amenities (e.g. buses, shops, medical facilities etc) to serve the development.
- Unacceptable loss of trees and landscaping.
- Loss of privacy and overlooking to neighbours created by views from windows and balconies of the proposed development.
- Proposal would have an overbearing impact on neighbours.
- Insufficient soft landscaping proposed.
- Detrimental light and noise pollution and disturbance to neighbours.
- Visual amenity of neighbours would be unacceptably impacted upon.
- Highways safety concerns especially on days when the local Rams Rugby pitch is in use for a game which draws significant spectator traffic.
- Detrimental impact on wildlife.
- Would create further demand on already oversubscribed schools in the area.

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework

National Design Guide

National Planning Practice Guidance

Core Strategy (CS)

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

CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals

CP10 - Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network.

CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits (Inc Countryside)

MDD Local Plan (MDD)

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
CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
TB05 – Housing Mix
TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens
TB07 – Internal Space Standards
TB12 – Employment Skills Plan
TB23 – Biodiversity and Development

Other

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
CIL Guidance + 123 List
Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document
Sonning Parish Design Statement
Sonning Design Appraisal
DCLG – Nationally Described Space Standards

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

1. In physical terms, the proposal is an almost identical resubmission of the extant permission (201833) which was granted at Planning Committee last year. The proposal seeks outline planning permission for up to 57 dwellings (1 and 2-bed apartments) for older persons, i.e.: over 60's, but this time also seeks approval of 'Appearance' incorporating the same approach to external elevations as already approved under the reserved matters application (213022).
2. The proposed units would be delivered across three separate residential blocks (refer to Fig 2.0 below) that would include ancillary communal lounges and guest suites to cater for the needs of prospective residents; with ancillary facilities including refuse areas and house manager's office also provided within each block. The development would utilise the existing vehicular access that would be widened and upgraded.
3. Communal landscaped garden spaces are proposed for the three blocks. 67 parking spaces provided including 10 disabled and spaces for the offices.
4. The applicant has agreed to enter into a legal agreement under s106 to secure a commuted payments towards Affordable Housing provision (with the ability to secure additional deferred payments should market conditions improve) and an Employment Skills Plan (ESP) that would be required to support this development and a travel plan to promote alternative sustainable modes of travel. In addition, the applicant has advised that they would be amenable to a restrictive clause in the s106 legal

agreement that would limit residential occupancy of the proposed units to the over 60s only and the revocation of an earlier permission (190693) for a single dwelling on 'The Lawns'.

Fig 1.0 - Location Plan extract:

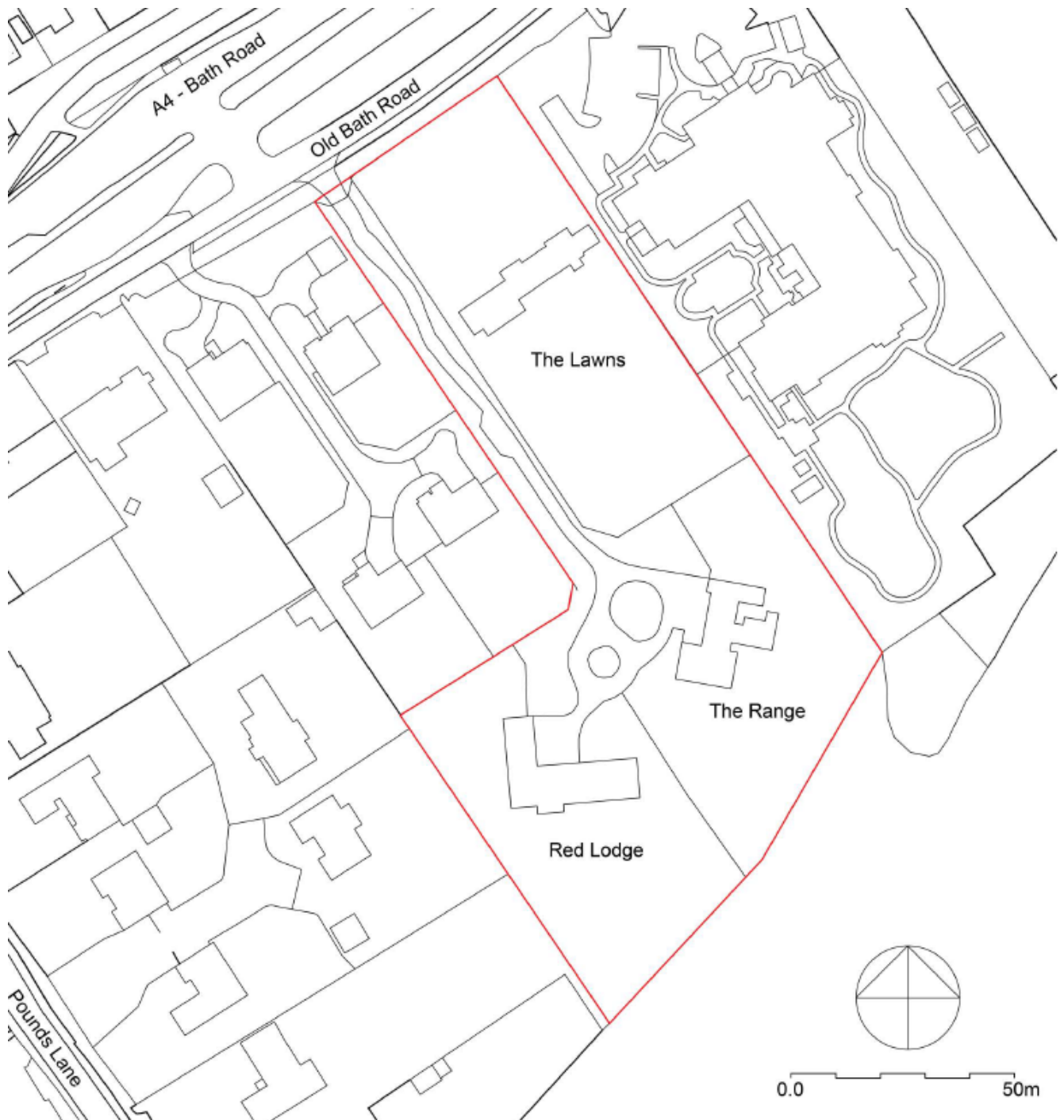
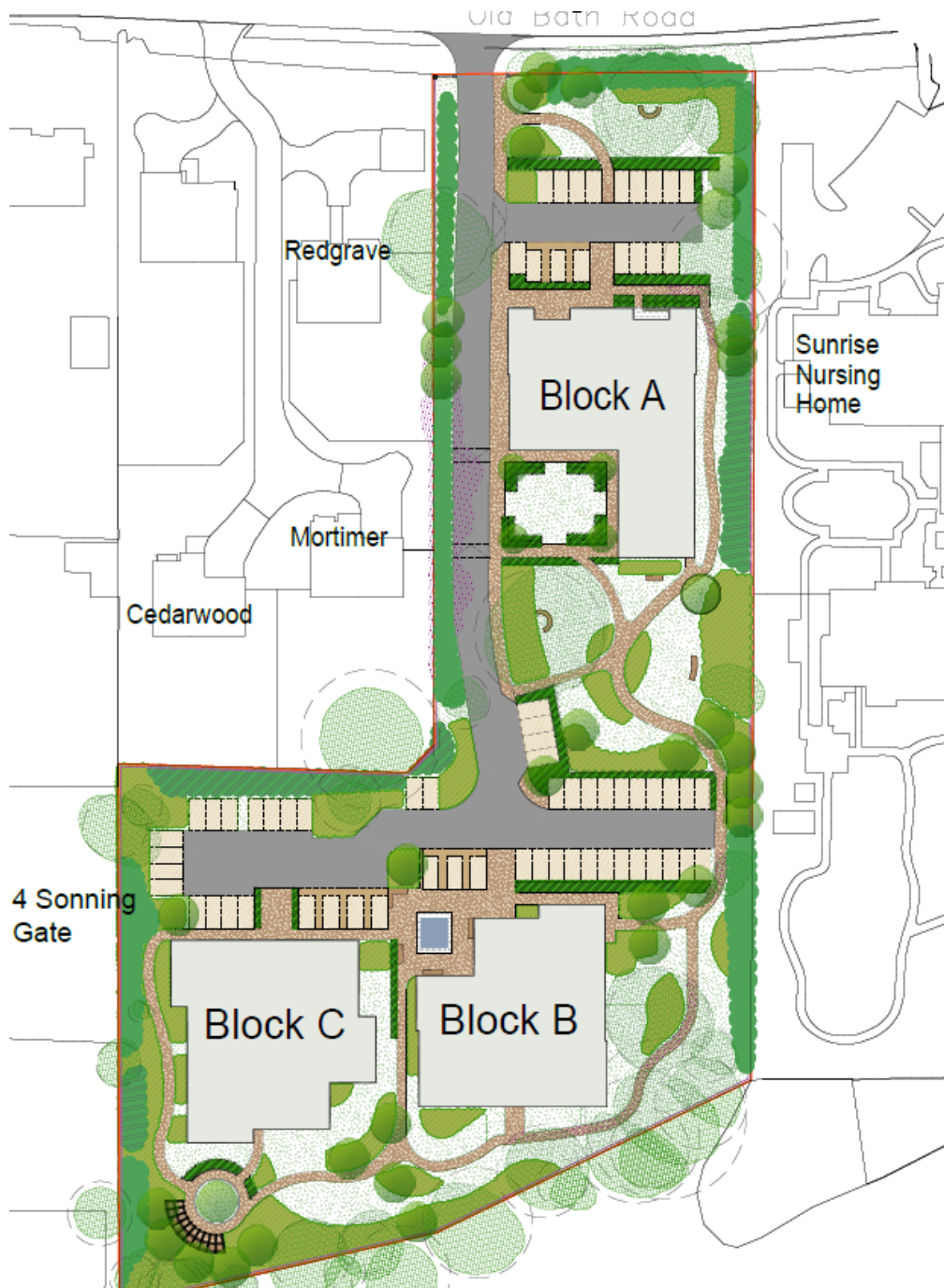


Fig 2.0 Proposed Site Layout Plan



5. The site is located on the eastern edge of the smaller settlement of Sonning, which is classified as a Limited Development Location as defined by Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy (2010), recognised as having ‘a basic range of services and facilities and are physically and socially cohesive’. The site (1.18ha) currently comprises three large, detached dwellings know as ‘Red Lodge’, ‘The Range’ and The Lawns’ and their shared private access road. The site is set back from Old Bath Road (a spur road from the newer A4 Bath Road) to the north. The site is well screened with trees and mature vegetation along most boundaries.
6. Immediately to the east the site abuts the site of a very large three storey building that currently operates as Sunrise Nursing Home, an assisted living and care home. Further east lies the Redingensians Rams RFC. The southern boundary of the application site

also defines the edge of the settlement boundary with designated countryside lying beyond (refer to Location Plan extract below), including the Sonning Golf Course. To the west there is a cluster of residential dwellings served off Sonning Gate and Pound Lane and a cul-de-sac of four dwellings ('Redgrave', 'Halstead', 'Cedarwood' and 'Mortimer') is also served off Old Bath Road and sits to the north-west of the application site. Generally, residential dwellings in the surrounding area predominately comprise of a suburban and large, detached form.

7. Following initial concerns raised by the Council's Landscape & Tree Officer, amended plans were submitted which revert to the layout approved under the extant permission 201833 which utilises a single vehicle access for all blocks (refer to Fig. 2.0 above).

Principle of Development:

8. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
9. Policy CC02 of the MDD sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map and therefore replaces the proposals map adopted through the Core Strategy, as per the requirement of policy CP9. Policy CP9 sets out that development proposals located within development limits will be acceptable in principle, having regard to the service provisions associated with the major, modest and limited categories. As the site is within a limited development location, the proposal is acceptable in principle. Moreover, the principle of this development has already been established by the extant outline permission (201833) and subsequent reserved matters (213022) approvals.

Character of the Area:

10. Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character, together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users, including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. Policy CC02 (Development Limits) of the MDD ensures new development 'respects the transition between the built-up area and the open countryside by taking account the character of the adjacent countryside and landscape'. Policy TB06 states that the Council will resist inappropriate development of residential gardens where they would cause harm to the local area.
11. The Sonning Parish Design Statement (2004) highlights that new buildings should respect the scale, massing and height of neighbouring properties and seek to create an appropriate balance between building scale and plot size.
12. As mentioned above, this Outline application is for 'Access', 'Layout', 'Appearance' and 'Scale' and these matters are discussed in the sections below. The detailed matter of 'Landscaping' is reserved for consideration at a later stage. The proposal would result in the demolition of three existing detached dwellings and erection of three three-storey apartment blocks; Block A (units), Block B (18 units) and Block C (20 units) with extended and widened access road and parking provision.

13. The approx. maximum dimensions of each block are outlined in the Table 1.0 below:

Table 1.0: Proposed block dimensions

	Width	Length	Height
Block A	29m	41m	12m
Block B	29m	31m	12.5m
Block C	31m	31m	12m

14. The proposed elevations reflect the same architectural detailing that was provided in the recent reserved matters (213022) approval. For example, the white rendered sections, header courses and black painted timber framing on Blocks A, B and C (refer to plans provided at Appendix 1) help better articulate these large elevations and suitably reduce their perceived mass and bulk of the proposed three buildings.
15. This approach to external elevational treatments is an improvement on the neighbouring Sunrise Senior Living building which uses a singular approach to external brickwork across a much bigger building. Hence, in elevational and urban design terms, the proposals are of a greater quality to that of this immediate neighbouring building.
16. While the bulk and massing of the proposed blocks are considerably larger than that of the host dwellings they would replace, they would have sufficient separation distance between each other to avoid appearing cramped or overly dominant in the context of the site and surrounding area. From most public locations to the north, the only aspect of the proposed development that would be visible would be Block A which would be set back approx. 40m from Old Bath Road and partially screened by existing and enhanced soft landscaping. Block A, while large, would act as suitable ‘transition building’ between the substantially bulkier Sunrise Nursing Home building and the neighbouring dwelling ‘Redgrave’; as is highlighted in the submitted streetscene drawing (refer to Fig. 3.0 below), as provided within the Design & Access Statement.
17. This streetscene drawing below provides a clear indication on proposed building heights and spacing between buildings. It should also be noted that this drawing doesn’t show the full extent of existing mature soft landscaping that would be retained along the Old Bath Road frontage of the site which is highlighted on Proposed Site Layout Plan (refer to Fig. 2.0 above), nor does it show the distance Block A is set back from Old Bath Road.

Fig. 3.0 Block A – Streetscene drawing from Old Bath Road (Page 14 of the DAS).



18. The Council’s Tree and Landscape Officer initially objected to this application as the first iteration of plans included a secondary vehicular access onto Old Bath Road that

was intended to serve Block A alone and excessive further areas of hardstanding to facilitate parking and vehicle turning. This arrangement would have resulted in an unacceptable loss of existing trees and vegetation along the Old Bath Road frontage of the site. This would have considerably 'opened up' views into the site and resulted in the loss of further TPO'd trees.

19. However, revised plans were submitted which revert to the original layout as approved under the extant planning permission (201833) and the Council's Tree and Landscape Officer has therefore withdrawn their objection subject to the imposition of conditions to secure detailed hard/soft landscape plans, tree protection measures (including demolition and construction phases) and a landscape maintenance plan.
20. The submitted LVIA identifies publicly accessible viewpoints within the relatively close proximity to the site at which locations where significant visual effects may be likely; it concludes that the *"overall effect on the character and appearance of the landscape would be a balance of limited to no visual effects on views from the local landscape"*.
21. In assessing the previous application, the Council's Trees & Landscape Officer commented on the submitted DAS and LVIA identifying that *"...it is important for the development to sit within the established landscape context of Old Bath Road, the southerly rural backdrop with the countryside and long views to the south as well as the integration of the development within the built environment is important to comply with Policy CP3 and CC03. The scale and intensity of the blocks within the site will be screened by the existing key trees and screening, new structural tree and hedge planting should be sufficient to provide this along with the other demands of the scale of this development"*. Given this latest proposal makes no substantive changes to the scheme in terms of its height, bulk and massing, the above conclusion within the submitted LVIA is again accepted subject to adherence to the aforementioned landscaping and tree protection conditions.
22. In density terms, the proposal would represent a significant increase (2.5DPH to 48DPH), however, this alone is not a clear indication that the proposal would adversely change the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As has been noted above, the neighbouring Sunrise Nursing Home is a very dominant and sprawling building that provides partial context to this part of Old Bath Road and already represents a significantly higher density than other existing individual dwellings in the vicinity. Hence, density alone is not a defining indicator of any significant harm in visual amenity terms and the proposal needs to be considered in its context of existing buildings of varying sizes and individual site-specific characteristics.
23. In respect of MDD Local Plan Policy TB06, the proposal would integrate with the character and appearance of the surrounding area largely due to the context set by the neighbouring Sunrise Nursing Home and the substantial depth of the site. The proposal would be compatible with the general building height of this building especially given the separation distances and spaces around the proposed blocks. These separation distances would also help mitigate the additional heights of the proposed blocks when viewed directly in context with smaller residential properties. Adequate boundary treatments and soft landscaping measures could be achieved at reserved matters stage and/or via condition.

24. In terms of the development's impact on longer distance views to, and from, the countryside to the south, proposed Blocks B and C benefit from being set in from the rear boundary of the site; the combination of existing and proposed soft landscaping along this boundary would help soften these buildings in this setting. Moreover, it must again be considered that these blocks would be seen from the south in the context of the adjacent Sunrise Nursing Home building and nucleated development clustered around the Bath Road/Pound Lane roundabout.
25. It is considered that the submitted LVIA demonstrates that the proposal achieves an appropriate balance between 'building scale' and separation on site which would respect the overall character and appearance of the area as well as not unduly impacting on views to and from the countryside to the south.
26. Therefore, the proposed development in terms of its 'Layout', 'Appearance' and 'Scale' would not harm the local area and is acceptable and compliant with the aforementioned design-based planning policies and guidance.

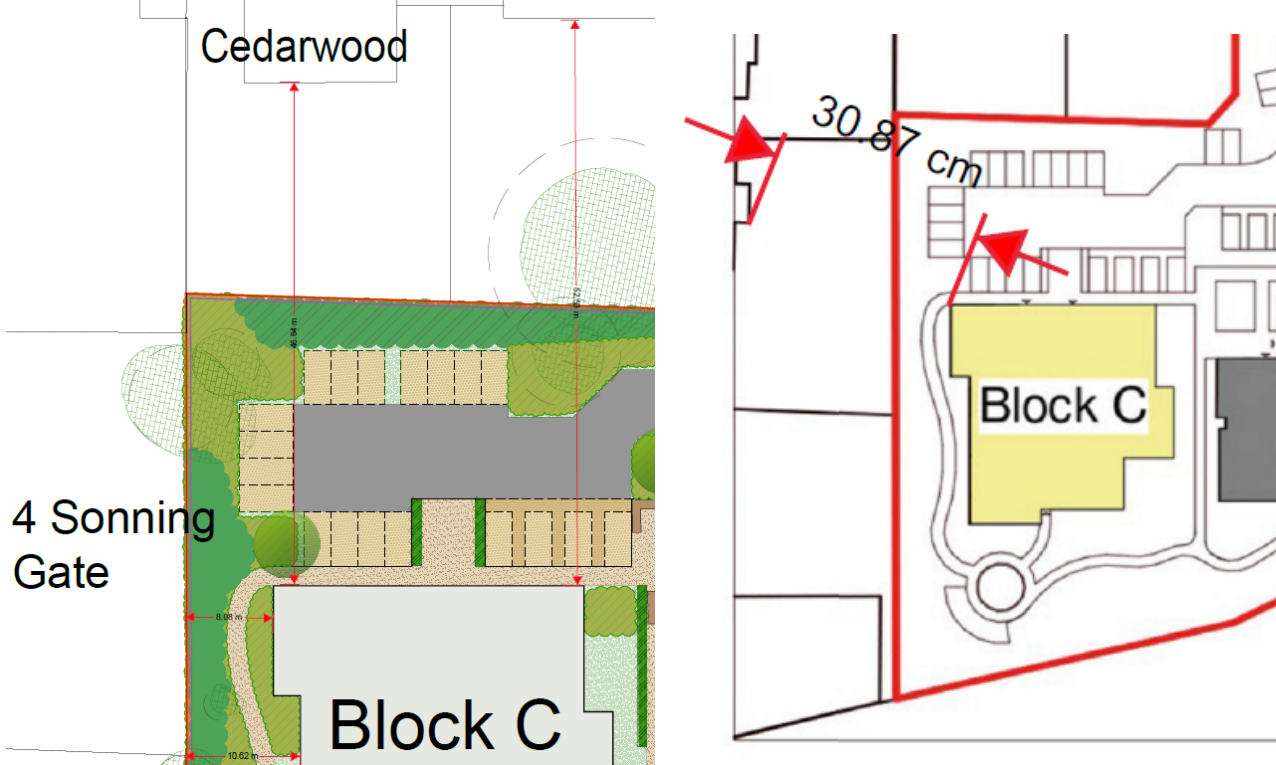
Residential Amenities:

27. Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that development proposals should not result in a detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. The Council's Borough Design Guide (BDG) stipulates that a minimum back-to-back distance of 30m should be provided between new flatted developments and existing housing in order to maintain privacy and limit the sense of enclosure and that dwellings must be designed to provide appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight to new and existing properties.
28. The proposal would introduce three much larger three-storey flatted blocks to replace the existing three dwellings on site. This would also involve the removal of a significant amount of vegetation mainly from within the middle of the site to facilitate both buildings and car parking areas. While the development would clearly represent a significant change in the form and arrangement of development on site, the extent to which the proposal impacts on the amenities of neighbours must still be assessed in the usual manner with reference to Core Strategy CP3 and separation distances referred to the Council's Borough Design Guide (BDG).

Overlooking:

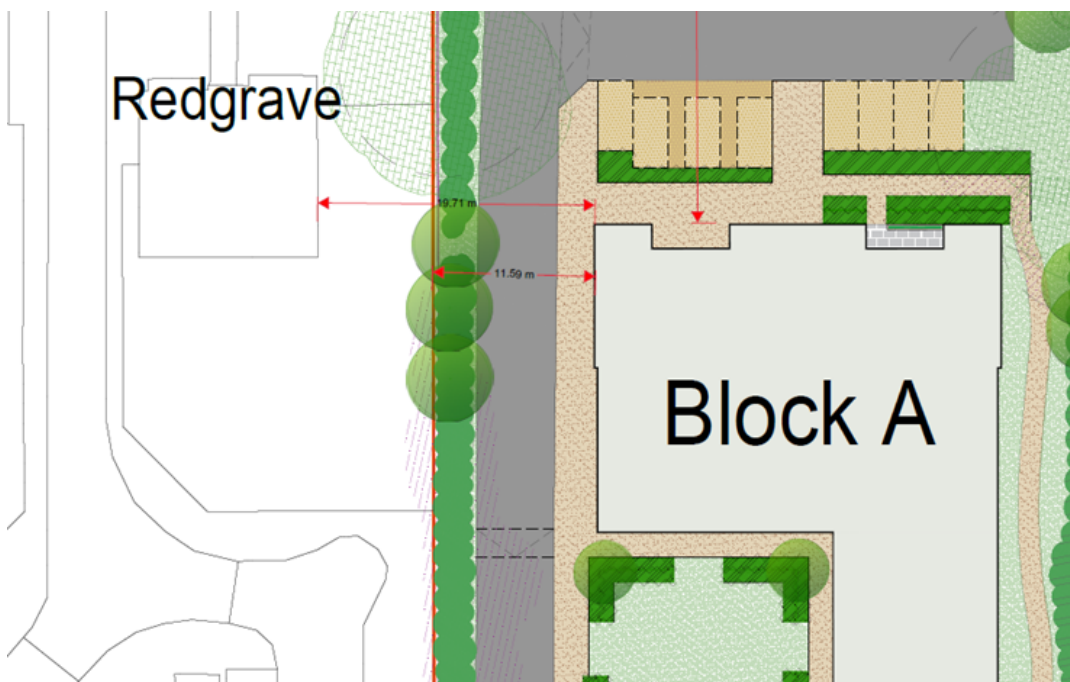
29. At its closest point, Block C would be sited approximately 31m from the rear of elevation of 4 Sonning Gate (and 8m from the property boundary) and 47m from the rear of elevation of Cedarwood (as demonstrated in Fig. 4.0 below). These separation distances are characteristic of the immediate area and exceed the guidance in the Council's Borough Design Guide. As such, no significant overlooking or loss of privacy to these, or other, neighbouring properties would occur.
30. It is noted that a significant amount of existing landscaping would be removed from the application site to facilitate the development; however, the proposed layout retains sufficient space for the retention and enhancement of soft landscaping to provide a 'green' buffer and screening between the boundaries of other existing residential properties. Moreover, conditions are recommended to secure details of boundary treatments around the application site and replacement soft landscaping and tree planting.

Fig. 4.0 - Relationship between Block C and 4 Sonning Gate and Cedarwood



31. In respect of Block A's proposed relationship with 'Redgrave', a 12m separation distance would be retained between the property boundary line and 19m would approx. be retained between the flank wall of this existing property (refer to Fig 5.0 below). This exceeds the 15m 'back to flank' separation distance (for development over 2 storeys) advocated within the Borough Design Guide. In addition, the proposed layout retains sufficient space for the retention of, and enhancement of, soft landscaping to provide a suitable visual 'green' buffer and screening from this neighbour.

Fig. 5.0 - Relationship between Block A and 'Redgrave', Old Bath Road.



32. Moreover, and to reflect the extant approval (201833) on this site, a condition is recommended to ensure that first and second floor windows in the west elevation of units 9, 10, 16 and 17 of Block be fitted with obscured glass and shall be non-opening below 1.7 metres. These are secondary windows within dual aspect flats and a westward outlook is not essential for these units. Adherence with the condition would further ensure that the privacy of 'Redgrave' is protected from any unacceptable overlooking.

Overbearing:

33. The proposal would be partially visible from the rear of immediate neighbouring dwellings and would represent a change from the existing situation on site. However, the proposal would not constitute a development that would be oppressive or overbearing to the extent that it would significantly detract from the amenities or surrounding dwellings largely because of the considerable separation distances proposed between these existing properties and the retained and enhanced soft landscaping treatments that could also be put in place.

Loss of light

34. R18 of the Borough Design Guide highlights that the British Research Establishment (BRE) methodology for 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight' should be used to assess the potential impact of a new development of the daylight in existing habitable rooms.
35. Due to the considerable separation distances that would be retained between the proposed development and existing neighbours, no significant overshadowing or loss of light to the neighbouring properties would occur as a result of this proposal. For example, 4 Sonning Gate would have the closest relationship with the proposed development - in respect of how its rear outlook may be impacted upon. This existing property's relationship with Block C has been assessed in line with the BRE methodology and the development would not obstruct a 25-degree line taken from this existing dwelling.
36. In respect Block A's proposed relationship with the existing property 'Redgrave' (refer to Fig. 5.0 above), the proposed development would not obstruct a 45-degree line taken from the centre line of a rear facing habitable room window as advocated within R.18 of the Borough Design Guide.
37. As such, no significant loss of daylight would occur to any of the existing neighbouring dwellings.
38. The proposal therefore protects the amenities of existing residential properties and complies with Core Strategy Policy CP3 and the Council's Borough Design Guide in this respect.

Access and Movement:

39. MDD Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street parking standards. Core Strategy Policy CP6 requires developments to provide appropriate vehicular parking, having regard to car ownership. P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that parking spaces should be safe and convenient, close to the dwelling and sited to minimise impact upon safety. Visibility splays and swept path analysis are also required to be specified on the plans.

Highway Safety:

40. Following initial concerns raised by the Council's Highways Officer regarding the lack of visibility splays for the additional vehicular access, revised plans have been submitted which revert to the layout approved under the extant permission (201833) with a singular access serving the entire development. This is deemed acceptable in highway safety terms.
41. In respect an objector's suggestion that the development should provide for a signalised crossing across the A4, WBC Highways Officer has commented that this would not be a suitable location for such a measure.

Traffic Impact:

42. The Council's Highways Officer has advised that due to the level of traffic on the A4, the resultant trip rates associated with the development would not have an adverse impact on the main highway network.

Parking:

43. The submitted revised plans also increase the level of parking from previously approved 63 spaces to 67, with the additional four spaces being located around Block B. The Council's Highways Officer advises that, using the Council's parking calculator, there would be a requirement for a range of between 52 and 80 spaces. The proposed additional 4 spaces are acceptable in terms of their layout and, after considering evidence of average parking rates for similar developments, the proportion of 67 spaces (1.18 per unit) is sufficient for both occupants of the development and any staff or visitors.
44. The applicant has indicated that one parking space would be allocated to each flat. WBC Highways have recommended that the parking spaces are left unallocated and a condition is recommended to secure a Parking Management Strategy for the site to secure the specific parking arrangements. Electric vehicle charging spaces may form part of the applicant's strategy for the requirement to generate 10% of the predicted energy for this development from decentralised renewable and/or low carbon sources. The Parking Management Strategy would also outline the monitoring and the delivery of additional electric vehicle charging spaces when required.
45. A total of 12 cycle parking spaces are proposed which falls short of the Council's normal standards for 1 space per flat. However, the applicant has provided a review of other similar sites which has identified that cycle use there is very low and the WBC Highway's Officer accepts that, in this particular instance, the 12 spaces proposed are suitable to serve the development. A condition is recommended to secure these details.

Sustainability:

46. WBC Highways have advised that the local bus services cannot be described as a good service under CP6. Bus route 128/129 has only 6 return journeys during the peak period with no off peak or weekend services. Bus route 850 has an hourly journey during the day and one evening service Monday to Saturday. There is no Sunday service. However, the site is located 'in-settlement' (and hence in a reasonably sustainable location with access to services) and the westbound bus stop is within an acceptable walk distance from the centre of the site. Implementation of an acceptable Travel Plan for this development could include items how to improve the sustainability of the site through measures such as mini-buses, taxis, on-line

services to improve deliveries etc; these would all be of assistance for those residents who do not own a car.

47. Hence, a draft Travel Plan was submitted with the application but is not fully sufficient in terms of travel surveys going forward for the development. However, WBC Highways accept that a condition could be imposed to secure the final version of the Travel Plan and this is again duly recommended.
48. Subject to compliance with these highways-related conditions, the proposal complies with Policy CC07 of the MDD Local Plan and Core Strategy Policy CP6.

Flooding and Drainage:

49. MMD Local Plan policy CC10 states that all development proposals must reproduce greenfield runoff characteristics and return run-off rates and volumes back to the original greenfield levels, for greenfield sites and for brownfield sites both run-off rates and volumes be reduced to as near greenfield as practicably possible.
50. The site is located within Flood Zone 1. Following submission of an acceptable addendum to the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, the Council's Drainage Officer has raised no objection to the proposal. While the proposal would result in an increase in impermeable area, it has been identified that areas of permeable paving have been designed to capture, attenuate and infiltrate surface water generated by the proposed development. The Council's Drainage Officer recommends conditions to secure maintenance details of SuDS management, submission of glow routing plan (above the 1 in 100+40% climate change event) and a contamination risk assessment before considering soakaways as a preferred means of discharging surface water.
51. Thames Water raise no objection to this proposal either in respect of waste water capacity or surface water drainage. However, they have recommended a condition to ensure that water network capacity is suitably upgraded to serve the development before any unit is occupied.
52. As such, the proposal is acceptable in flooding and drainage respects being in accordance with MDD Local Plan policy CC10.

Landscape and Trees:

53. Policy CC03 aims to protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features as well as existing Green Routes. Core Strategy Policy CP3 aims to create a sense of place in the way buildings integrate with their surroundings including the use of appropriate landscaping.
54. The applicant has submitted an Arboricultural Survey and Impact Assessment (to BS5837:2012) which has been assessed by the WBC Trees and Landscape Officer. There are 6 protected trees within the site which are covered by TPO 1252/2008. Across the whole site there are 74 single trees, 9 groups of trees and 10 hedgerows, 3 'A' quality, 16 'B' quality and 57 'C' quality and 17 'U' trees. The majority of the tree stock across the site are graded 'C' (57 No.) and over half of these trees will be removed. All trees classified as 'U' will be removed. All 'A' and 'B' quality trees will remain.

55. In assessing the previous application (201833) on this site, the WBC Trees and Landscape Officer commented that while *“the overall tree stock will be reduced by at least 66%... Many of the removals are located in the interior site consisting of trees, hedges and shrubberies that formed the gardens and structural buffer planting between the existing plots”* and that the submitted LVIA demonstrates that *“...the development can be contained within the existing landscape structure and setting with minimal impact on the suburban character of the area, and with visual impacts limited to a number of dwellings close by but acceptable within the residential character”* (refer to previous officers report for 201833 at Appendix 3).
56. Following submission of revised plans to retain a single vehicle entrance to this site, the WBC Trees and Landscape Officer have confirmed they raise no objection to this latest application subject to conditions to secure details of hard and soft landscaping measures, tree protection information (updated to include demolition and construction phases) and a Landscape Management Plan. Subject to compliance with these conditions, the proposal complies with Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan and Core Strategy Policy CP3.

Environmental Health:

57. Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity.
58. The site falls outside of any potential contaminated land consultation zone. However, the proposal has been considered by the Council’s Environmental Health Officer in respect of Contaminated Land, Noise, Lighting and Demolition and Construction Impacts. No objection to this proposal has been raised subject to conditions to deal with the following:
- A Noise Impact Assessment detailing any required noise attenuation measures proposed within the development to protect existing residents and future occupants.
 - Any unexpected contamination found during site clearance, groundwork or construction.
 - No floodlighting or other forms of external lighting without separate approval
 - Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
 - Construction hours limited to 08:00 and 18:00 Mon-Fri and 08:00 to 13:00 Sat and at no time on Sun or public holidays.
59. Subject to adherence with the above conditions, the proposal would suitably protect existing neighbouring residents from any excessive pollution during construction and after the development is constructed. Moreover, the proposal would protect future occupants from any unexpected land contamination and therefore complies with Policy CC06 of the MDD Local Plan and Core Strategy Policy CP3.

Amenity Space for future occupiers:

60. Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that provide functional amenity space. The Borough Design Guide states that all dwellings should have access to amenity space, preferably in the form of private or communal garden space.

61. Although landscaping detail is a reserved matter, this outline application is accompanied by a Masterplan for Landscaping Proposals plan. This plan indicates that the proposed apartments would have access to four communal garden areas (one on the site frontage, one the middle of the site and two at the rear of the site) in addition to space for a bowling green located behind Block A. These areas comprise over 4,000sqm of external communal amenity space that would be connected by footpaths around the development. Although some this space would be tree-covered, it would equate to more than 25sqm per each habitable room within the proposed development thereby providing usable outdoor amenity space for future occupants.
62. These areas of open space would also provide a setting for the three blocks of apartments proposed as well as providing a suitable outlook for windows within habitable rooms for the development. Many of units proposed would also have access to a private balcony overlooking these areas. Specific details of landscaping would be secured by the subsequent Reserved Matters application and relevant conditions.
63. Therefore, the proposal would provide adequate outdoor amenity space in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy CP3 and with guidance contained within the Borough Design Guide.

Internal Space Standards:

64. Policy TB07 of the MDD and R17 of the Borough Design Guide SPD require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity. The Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (NDSS) sets out minimum internal floor areas.
65. Table 2.0 below demonstrates that the proposal meets all the NDSS requirements; the right-hand (green) column shows respectively by how much each flat exceeds the minimum standard. In summary, all the units proposed meet the following floorspace criteria:
- Have a GIA above the NDSS standard
 - Single room width over and above NDSS standard
 - Single room floor space over and above NDSS standard
 - Double room width over and above NDSS standard
 - Double room floor space over and above NDSS standard

Table 2.0: Gross Internal Floorspace comparison (Proposed units and NDSS)

Plot no	House Type	House Details			Proposed	National Standards	Difference
BLOCK	A	Floors	Beds	Person	GIA	GIA	GIA
1	Flat	1	2	3	80	61	+19
2	Flat	1	2	3	78	61	+17
3	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+15
4	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+15
5	Flat	1	1	2	64	50	+14
6	Flat	1	1	2	66	50	+16
7	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+25
8	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+25
9	Flat	1	2	3	78	61	+17
10	Flat	1	2	3	80	61	+19

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11	Flat	1	2	3	71	61	+10
12	Flat	1	2	3	80	61	+19
13	Flat	1	1	2	66	50	+16
14	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+25
15	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+25
16	Flat	1	2	3	84	61	+23
17	Flat	1	2	3	80	61	+19
18	Flat	1	2	3	71	61	+10
19	Flat	1	2	3	80	61	+19
BLOCK B							
1	Flat	1	2	3	74	61	+13
2	Flat	1	1	2	56	50	+5
3	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
4	Flat	1	2	3	79	61	+18
5	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+25
6	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+25
7	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
8	Flat	1	1	3	77	61	+16
9	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
10	Flat	1	1	2	56	50	+6
11	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
12	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+25
13	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+25
14	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
15	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
16	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
17	Flat	1	1	2	56	50	+6
18	Flat	1	2	3	56	61	+5
BLOCK C							
1	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
2	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
3	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+15
4	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+15
5	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
6	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
7	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
8	Flat	1	1	2	56	50	+6
9	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
10	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+15
11	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+15
12	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
13	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
14	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
15	Flat	1	1	2	56	50	+6
16	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
17	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+25
18	Flat	1	2	3	86	61	+25
19	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16
20	Flat	1	2	3	77	61	+16

66. The above calculations assumes that 1-bedroom flats would have a maximum of 2 persons occupancy and 2-bedroom flats have maximum of 3-person occupancy. These occupancy rates are justified given the nature of the development, i.e. for occupancy by over 60's only.
67. The majority (42) of the proposed units would benefit from dual aspect with the remaining having single aspect. Habitable rooms within all units would have an adequate outlook and a natural light source via an external window. Overall, the proposal would achieve good internal amenity for each unit thereby complying with

the aims of MDD Policy TB07, the NDSS and guidance with the Borough Design Guide.

Ecology:

68. 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. Policy CP7 states that sites designated as of importance for nature conservation at an international or national level will be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted. It also states that development which may harm species of principal importance... will only be permitted if it has been demonstrated... mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts or... appropriate compensation measure to offset the... losses are provided.
69. The application site lies within the Council's Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Model and the applicant has therefore submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and a Bat Activity Surveys report to support this proposal.
70. The Council's Ecologist has reviewed this proposal in light of these supporting documents and concurs that the application site currently provides foraging and commuting habitat for bats and nesting habitat for birds and that the submitted evidence *"does support the conclusion of a likely absence of a maternity roost in any of the three buildings"*.
71. The NPPF highlight that it is appropriate for the local planning authority to seek the inclusion of wildlife habitat enhancements within a development. The submitted PEA has made recommendations for biodiversity enhancements as part of this proposal and the Council's Ecologist has recommended that a condition be imposed to ensure that these works are carried out in full. In addition, it is also recommended that the extent of ecological enhancements, mitigation and protection need to be reflected in the landscaping, materials, external lighting and Construction Environmental Management Plan conditions.
72. The Council's Ecologist has also recommended a condition to ensure that no works shall commence until a licence for development works affecting bats has been obtained from Natural England and submitted to the local planning authority.
73. Subject to compliance with these conditions, the proposal complies with Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan. Core Strategy Policy CP7 and with guidance contained within the NPPF.

Sustainable Design/Construction:

74. Policy CC05 of the MDD Local Plan encourages renewable energy and decentralised energy networks, with encouragement of decentralised energy systems and a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions for developments of more than 10 dwellings.
75. The applicant has submitted a Sustainability Statement to support this application which identifies several potential measures to promote sustainable design such as energy consumption, water usage, surface water drainage, shading and solar gain, recycling, biodiversity, limiting light/noise, construction and NOx pollution, cycle storage, responsibly sourced and recycled materials and site waste. The

Sustainability Statement also indicates that *“as part of the proposal, the client plans to have solar photo voltaic systems fitted to provide over 10% of the energy required by the dwellings during an average year from local sources”*.

76. As such, a pre-commencement condition is recommended to ensure that a scheme for generating 10% of the predicted energy requirement of the development from decentralised renewable and/or low carbon sources (e.g. solar panels, electric charging points) is implemented in order to accord with the aims of Core Strategy policy CP1, MDD Local Plan policy CC05 & the Council’s Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

Archaeology:

77. Policy TB25 of the MDD Local Plan states that in areas of high archaeological potential, applicants will need to provide a detailed assessment of the impact on archaeological remains. Where development is likely to affect an area of high archaeological potential or an area which is likely to contain archaeological remains, the presumption is that appropriate measures shall be taken to protect remains by preservation in situ. Where this is not practical, applicants shall provide for excavation, recording and archiving of the remains.
78. As indicated on the previous application (201833), the site is located close to areas containing significant archaeological remains, with seven nationally important Scheduled Monuments lying to the north-east of the site, identified by crop marks indicating the presence of prehistoric monuments. The nearest Scheduled Monument is less than 275m from the application site. In addition to this, evidence for Roman and medieval activity was recorded to the south-west of the site at Mustard Lane. Prehistoric settlement activity was also identified during work at Duffield House to the south of the proposed site and at two sites to the south of Charvil at East Park Farm and Land West of Park Lane.
79. Berkshire Archaeology were consulted on this application and again raise no objection advising that the archaeological evaluation of this site should be secured through a planning condition. This would accord with Paragraph 205 of the NPPF which states that *“Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.”*
80. Subject to compliance with this condition, the proposal complies with Policy TB25 of the MDD Local Plan and with guidance contained within the NPPF.

Affordable Housing, Employment Skills Plan (ESP) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Affordable Housing:

81. The threshold for seeking affordable housing is 5 dwellings or more on residential sites of 0.16 hectares or larger. The site exceeds this threshold and therefore a requirement exists to seek the provision of affordable housing. To meet the requirements of Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy, a minimum contribution of 40% of the total number of units (net) should be provided as affordable housing. This equates to 22.8 units in the proposed development of 57 apartments.

82. The proposals would not meet the Council's Adult Social Care needs and therefore the only practical means of delivery for the provision affordable housing is through a commuted affordable housing financial contribution secured via a s106 legal agreement. Using guidance contained within the Council's Affordable Housing SPD, the Housing Policy Officer has advised that the commuted sum sought in-lieu of 22.8 units (40%) would be £1,696,706.88 and should be index-linked, to contribute towards affordable housing provision elsewhere in the borough.
83. However, the applicant has advised that the scheme is not financially viable with any Affordable Housing contribution and have submitted a Viability Appraisal to reflect this which is considered in more detail in the Financial Viability section of this report below.

Employment Skills Plan (ESP):

84. Policy TB12 of the Wokingham Borough Council MDD, requires planning applications for all major development (both commercial and residential) in Wokingham Borough to submit an employment skills plan (ESP) with a supporting method statement.
85. The applicant has provided their agreement to the principle of making a financial contribution in lieu of an ESP. WBC Economic Prosperity & Place raises no objection to this approach. Such an obligation would be secured via a s106 legal agreement if Planning Committee are minded to grant planning permission to this scheme.
86. The s106 for the above contributions is presently being drafted by the Council's Legal team in discussion with the applicant and any grant of consent would in effect delegate officers to finalise the terms agreed.

Community Infrastructure Levy:

87. The application is liable for CIL payments because it involves a net increase of 54 new dwellings, payable at a rate of £365/m², index linked.

Financial Viability

88. This application is accompanied by an Affordable Housing Financial Viability Appraisal (FVA) which demonstrates that the development could not sustain a policy compliant (40%) financial contribution (£1,605,236.16) in lieu towards of affordable housing units being provided on site. In this context and considering the identified shortfall in the supply of affordable housing within the borough, officers and the Council's Valuer have a responsibility to explore all available mechanisms in order to allow the scheme to either provide some form of initial contribution or recover policy compliance should viability improve over time.
89. As a starting point, a minimum upfront affordable housing contribution of £100,000 (equivalent to 2.5%) was offered by the applicant, alongside a late-stage review mechanism to consider the potential for deferred payments if financial viability of the scheme improves.
90. Therefore, whilst this initial affordable housing offer does not achieve the full local policy compliant level of 40%, a nominal upfront financial contribution with a deferred payment mechanism to recover any increase in value, constitutes a reasonable and justified position for the Council at this stage in this particular instance. As an agreed and acceptable position, this would have constituted a nominal initial public benefit that would have weighed in favour of the scheme, although not in a substantial way.

91. Notwithstanding the above agreed viability position, it is necessary to consider whether accepting the upfront financial contribution is reasonable in the circumstances, bearing in mind Case Law which confirms that a willing applicant does not in itself justify provision of a planning obligation.
92. Paragraph 57 of the NPPF outlines clearly the tests which must be met for a planning obligation to be sought:
- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - (b) directly related to the development; and
 - (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
93. Firstly, in considering test (a) as to whether the obligation would be ‘necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms’, there is no disagreement that 56 dwellings should be contributing meaningfully to affordable housing provision within the borough.
94. In taking a consistent approach with other residential-led schemes in the borough and with the clear intent on seeking policy compliant affordable housing contributions from other applications, affordable housing is justifiably held as an important material public benefit of any scheme considered by the LPA. This application is no exception. The NPPF requires such benefits to be realised upon the grant of planning permission, and it is considered consistent that the decision-maker reserves the right to take into account such provision alongside all other benefits, whether below or above policy compliance.
95. In returning to test (a) of paragraph 57, it is established that where the proposal conflicts with other policies in the plan, a higher percentage of affordable housing is capable of being justified. This approach is consistent with a LPA securing a greater percentage of affordable housing in order to ‘make the development acceptable in planning terms’.
96. With regard to test (b) the provision of affordable housing within any residential development is directly related to the development. This is set out in Section 5 of the NPPF ‘Delivering a sufficient supply of homes’ and within the general policies within the Council’s Local Plan. Affordable housing is most directly related to a residential-led scheme than any other type of development, in terms of its importance in achieving mixed and balanced communities.
97. With regard to the final test which must be met for a planning obligation to be sought (test (C)), this requires any planning obligation to be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development to which it relates. The overall proportion of affordable housing being offered as part of this scheme is considered fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development as a whole based on the FVA. This is a reasonable proposition in the context of the general housing objectives of the NPPF. The financial contribution offered is also not considered disproportionate in context to the general requirements of the local plan, nor represents such a level of provision that it would distort the overall nature of the development proposed. The obligation is therefore reasonably considered to meet test (c).

98. In accepting that the tests within paragraph 56 of the NPPF are met, an additional factor which must be considered is any perceived risk that by accepting an up-front financial contribution (amounting to £100,000), this would further undermine the viability of the scheme. Any negative financial position which would come about as a result of such an offer is made at the developer's own risk and made under the full understanding that the FVA information submitted as part of this application is on record (confidentially) and has formed the basis of agreed affordable housing position. To conclude there is no specific policy or guidance preventing such an up-front financial contribution being accepted despite a FVA position which does not allow the LPA to secure any AH contribution (on-site or otherwise).

Other issues:

99. Comments from Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (RBFR) regarding the extra pressures that the development may place on the service are noted. However, the extent of these impacts would not be a material consideration that would warrant refusal of the application or planning obligation.

100. The concerns raised by the TVP Crime Prevention Design Officer regarding the dual vehicular entrance to the site initially proposed have been addressed by the submission of the revised plans which revert to the original layout approved under the extant permission (201833). The other comments in respect of internal arrangements and bins/buggy store security details have been forwarded to the applicant who has advised will consider within their final design of the scheme. However, these issues are not fundamental to the security of the scheme, so no conditions are recommended in these respects.

Planning balance:

101. The proposal incorporates the same layout as extant outline permission (201833) and similar elevational treatments to that already approved at reserved matters stage (213022). While the principle of the development has already been established by these previous consents, the potential impacts of the proposed scheme on the character of the area, residential amenity, highways, flooding, trees, ecology and archaeology have been reassessed and are able to be mitigated by the planning conditions recommended at Appendix 2 below. The benefits associated with the proposed delivery of 57 dwellings are substantial and must be given significant weight in the planning balance.

102. While the proposal no longer intends policy compliant contributions towards affordable housing, a robust Financial Viability Assessment has been submitted, and independently verified, which demonstrates that the scheme is unviable with full contributions at this present time. However, the applicant has agreed to enter into a s106 legal agreement to ensure that a deferred payment mechanism would enable for a further affordable housing commuted payment should the profitability of the scheme improve in the future. On balance, the significant benefits of this scheme outweigh the current shortfall in affordable housing contributions especially given the scope to secure the aforementioned deferred payments.

CONCLUSION

103. The application is recommended for approval subject to the planning obligations and conditions detailed at the start of this report.

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. 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.

APPENDIX 1 - Conditions / informatives

1. Outline permission – Time periods and submission of details

- a) No development shall commence until details of Landscaping (including all the ecological enhancements specified within section 7.0 of the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal as prepared by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, ref: LLD1856, July 2020) hereinafter called the reserved matters, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the development shall be carried out as approved.
- b) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than three years from the date of this permission.

The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.

Reason: In pursuance of s.92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Approved plans and details

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans, drawings and reports numbered:

Location Plan 8399-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-1000 P1
Site Sections sheet 2 - 8399-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-3002 Rev P4
Site Sections sheet 1 - 8399-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-3001 RevP4
as received by the local planning authority on 02 March 2022; and

Proposed Site Plan 8399-BOW-A0-ZZ-DR-A-0002 P5
as received by the local planning authority on 26 August 2022

Block A – Proposed Plans and Elevations 8399-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-2001 Rev: P13
Block B - Proposed Plans and Elevations 8399-BOW-A2-ZZ-DR-A-2002 Rev: P14
Block C – Proposed Plans and Elevations 8399-BOW-A3-ZZ-DR-A-2003 Rev: P14
as received by the local planning authority on 27 October 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. External materials

Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so- approved details. In accordance with paragraph 4.16 of Bat Activity Surveys (Crossman Associates ref A1144.001, August 2020) a Traditional type 1 f felt must be used as the roof tile sarking layer, and moisture resistant Gyproc boarding fitted in the roof void in building C.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory and species of principal importance are protected. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP7

4. Details of boundary walls and fences and hedges

Before the development hereby permitted is commenced 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, CP6 and CP7.

5. Unexpected contamination

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

b) Works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved 'remediation method statement' (submitted to comply with condition 5a above) and a final validation report shall be submitted to the local planning authority before the site (or relevant phase of the development site) is occupied.

Reason: To protect future occupiers and users of the site from the harmful effects of contamination. Relevant policy: MMD Local Plan policy CC06 and Core Strategy policy CP3.

6. External Lighting

No floodlighting or other forms of external lighting shall be installed unless it is in accordance with details which have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include location, height, type and direction of light sources and intensity of illumination and through the provision of appropriate contour plans, curfews and technical specifications clearly demonstrate that any areas to be lit will not disturb or negatively impact biodiversity. Any lighting shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and biodiversity. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP7 and MDD Local Plan policy TB21 and TB23.

7. Noise assessment/mitigation

Prior to development commencing an assessment of noise shall to be carried out by a suitably qualified person and a report provided to the Local Authority for approval. The noise assessment shall be in accordance with BS8233:2014, consider the requirements of Policy WBC Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) CC06 and be based on worst case scenario. Proposals must demonstrate how they have identified and addressed all potential noise impacts, their significance and what mitigation measures are proposed where impacts are deemed significant. The report is to assess noise impacts:

- i) on neighbouring residential and the care home properties during demolition/construction phase
- ii) from external sources (including the A4, Sunrise Care Home operations & golf course maintenance operations) and operational sources (including site service and delivery vehicles) on occupants of the new development.

The development shall not be occupied until the noise mitigation measure(s) identified in the approved impact assessment, have been fully implemented. Any noise mitigation measures shall be retained and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To safeguard residential amenities & for the protection of occupiers

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

8. Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

No development (including demolition and site clearance) shall take place until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to control the environmental effects of the demolition and construction work has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall include measures for:

- i) the control of dust, odour and other effluvia
- ii) the control of noise (including noise from any piling and permitted working hours)
- iii) the control of pests and other vermin (particularly during site clearance)
- iv) the control of surface water run-off)
- v) the control of noise from delivery vehicles, and times when deliveries are accepted and when materials can be removed from the site
- vi) the proposed method of piling for foundations (if any)
- vii) proposed construction and demolition working hours
- vi) hours during the construction and demolition phase when delivery vehicles, or vehicles taking materials, are permitted to enter or leave the site.
- viii) External Lighting (flood lighting)
- ix) practical measures to avoid or reduce impacts during construction
- x) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features
- xi) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.

Construction activity shall be carried out in accordance with the approved CEMP.

Reason: To protect residential amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3, CP6 and CP7.

9. Permitted 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 public holiday.

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.

10. Communications Plan

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, a Communications Plan. The Plan shall specify methods for communicating with local residents, including the creation of a

liaison group to meet in accordance with an agreed schedule. The Plan shall be carried out as approved until the final completion of the development.

Reason: In order to minimise disturbance to neighbours during construction works.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3

11. 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.

12. Visibility splays

Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, details of the proposed vehicular access to include visibility splays of 43m x 2.4m. The access shall be formed as so-approved and the visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height prior to the occupation of the development. The access 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. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

13. Demolition and 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, neighbour amenities and biodiversity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3, CP6 and CP7.

14. Highway Construction Details

Prior to the commencement of development, 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 & CP6.

15. Cycle parking

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

Reason: 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. Parking Management Strategy

Prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted, a Parking Management Strategy for the management of the parking arrangements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted Parking Management Strategy shall include details of the management of all parking spaces and the monitoring and the delivery of additional electric vehicle charging spaces when required.

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.

17. Electric Vehicle Charging

Prior to 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 Electric Vehicle Charging points 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 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 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

18. Protection of trees

a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works (including for demolition and construction phases) 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 or biodiversity 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 CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

19. Landscape Proposals

Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals (including all the ecological enhancements specified within section 7.0 of the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report as prepared by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, ref: LLD1856, July 2020) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc). Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

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

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and CP7 Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03, TB06 and TB21.

20. Landscape management

Prior to the commencement of the development a landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than privately owned, domestic

gardens, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: In order to ensure that provision is made to allow satisfactory maintenance of the landscaping and protection and enhancement for biodiversity hereby approved. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

21. Obscure glazing on windows

The first and second floor windows in the west elevation of units 9, 10, 16 and 17 of Block A of the development hereby permitted shall be fitted with obscured glass and shall be permanently so-retained. The windows shall be non-opening unless the parts of the window which can be opened are more than 1.7 metres above the finished floor level of the room in which the window is installed and shall be permanently so- retained.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenities of neighbouring properties. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3

22. Surface Water Drainage

No development shall be put in to use/occupied until a SuDS management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Plan should fully detail the access that is required to reach surface water management component for maintenance purposes. It should also include a plan for safe and sustainable removal and disposal of waste periodically arising from drainage system, detailing the materials to be used and standard of work required including method statement. The approved SUDS maintenance plan shall be implemented in full in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions.

Reason: To ensure the continued operation and maintenance of drainage features serving the site and avoid flooding. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.

23. Exceedance Flow

Development shall not take place until an exceedance flow routing plan for flows above the 1 in 100+40% climate change event has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The proposed scheme shall identify exceedance flow routes through the development based on proposed topography with flows being directed to highways and areas of public open space. Flow routes through gardens and other areas in private ownership will not be permitted. The scheme shall subsequently be completed in accordance with the approved details before the development is first brought into use/occupied.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory drainage of the site and avoid flooding. It is important that these details are agreed prior to the commencement of development as any works on site could have implications for drainage in the locality. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.

24. Soakaways and potential contamination

A contamination risk assessment is required before considering soakways as a preferred means of discharging surface water. No soakaways shall be constructed in contaminated ground. Where pollution risks are identified, intercepted water should be prevented from infiltrating prior to sufficient treatment.

Reason: To prevent pollution of groundwater, It is important that these details are agreed prior to the commencement of development as any works on site could have implications for drainage in the locality. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (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. Archaeology

No development shall take place within the site until the applicant, or their agents or their successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase of work) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.

Reason: The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. A programme of archaeological work is required to mitigate the impact of development and to record any surviving remains so as to advance our understanding of their significance.

Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB25.

26. Protected Species

No works affecting the bat roosts nor any roof stripping nor demolition works 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) including the detailed mitigation and special conditions annex 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 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 material consideration, are not adversely affected by the development. Relevant policy: Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan and Core Strategy Policy CP7.

27. Biodiversity Enhancements

Works are to be carried out in full accordance with the ecological enhancement measures specified in paragraphs 4.16 to 4.32 and appendices I and II of the submitted Bat Activity Surveys report (Crossman Associates, ref: A1144.001, August 2020), unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.

Reason: To secure a net gain for biodiversity as per NPPF paras. 174 and 180 and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 CP7 MMD Local Plan policy TP23.

28. Sustainable Energy requirements

Prior to the commencement of development a scheme for generating 10% of the predicted energy requirement of the development from decentralised renewable and/or low carbon sources (as defined in the glossary of Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change (December 2007) or any subsequent version) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the development is first occupied and shall remain operational for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (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.

Informatives

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

The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

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

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

- i) NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport)
- ii) ii) The Essential Guide to Travel Planning (DfT, March 2008) 3)
Delivering Travel Plans Through the Planning Process (DfT, April 2009)
- iii) A Guide on Travel Plans for Developers (DfT)
- iv) 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>

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.

4. WBC waste information for developers can be found here:
<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/collections/waste-information-for-developers/>
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. Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service (RBFRS) and Councillors advise that the developer should consider the use of a Fire Suppression (Sprinkler) Systems within this development in order to provide optimal fire prevention measures.
8. A Groundwater Risk Management Permit from Thames Water will be required for discharging groundwater into a public sewer. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. We would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures he will undertake to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. Permit enquiries should be directed to Thames Water's Risk Management Team by telephoning 020 3577 9483 or by emailing trade.effluent@thameswater.co.uk Application forms should be completed on line via:
<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thameswater.co.uk%2F&data=04%7C01%7Cdevelopment.control%40wokingham.gov.uk%7Ca214d50227ef47161f1308da19746a53%7C996ee15c0b3e4a6f8e65120a9a51821a%7C0%7C0%7C637850285045417497%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLjBtIi6k1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000&data=ySd1hWkyCX0o5yt1vAxbR8ME0eMLwhd5BT5aYMI4RK8%3D&reserved=0>.
Please refer to the Wholesale; Business customers; Groundwater discharges section.

APPENDIX 2 - Parish Council Full Comments

Sonning Parish Council has carefully considered this revised application and cannot find any reason to reconsider its original strong objections.

The applicant has acted in a most, confusing and unprofessional manner, swapping from one plan to another, applied for an application that they already had approval for and now reverts to a former plan with a single access to the site. With the number of residents that can be expected to live in the flats, this single access represents a retrograde, deficient, and substandard plan.

The Parish Council is disappointed that no further thought has been given to limiting the difficulties and dangers that the elderly residents will be exposed to when crossing the A4 after a crossing was ruled out. The limited facilities within easy walking distance are even more limited with this route unlikely to be an attractive and convenient option.

In the light of the above comments that Parish Council wishes to confirm that the original strong objection remain as set out below.

The Parish Council were surprised to see that this application was identical, apart from some minor cosmetic, changes, to the previous application 201833. Further they were extremely concerned to read that the applicant was now claiming that the proposed scheme was unviable despite the approval document confirming that:

The applicant has agreed to enter into a s106 legal agreement to secure policy compliant financial contributions in lieu of 40% Affordable Housing provision and an Employment Skills Plan (ESP) that would be required to support this development. In addition, the applicant has advised that they would be amenable to a restrictive clause in the s106 legal agreement that would limit residential occupancy of the proposed units to the over 60s only.”

The Parish Council understands that the principle of the developer making a financial contribution to affordable housing off site is normal on such large developments and questions the reasons behind this apparent change of direction. The original application was granted on the premise that £1.6m was to be paid in lieu of lack of Affordable Housing on site. Can the Parish Council assume that poor financial planning is behind the developers now finding themselves in the situation where paying this sum makes the project unviable. The Parish Council would suggest that the answer is for 40% of the 57 flats being sold as Affordable Housing, (or is the reason behind the change calculated to obtain planning permission by previously agreeing the s106 payment and now rescinding on that agreement).

In addition to the above the Parish Council’s original objection remain the same.

IMPACT ON THE AREA

- *Sonning, is a Limited Development Location and the dwellings surrounding this proposal are low density, detached, on large plots surrounded by mature trees, high hedges and screened from the main road. This reflects the semi-rural aspect of Sonning.*
- *The proposed development is on the edge of the settlement and adjoins designated countryside where developments can be expected to be of a lower density and denotes the gradual reduction of development as it adjoins the countryside. The proposed*

development is unsuitable due to its urban nature, height, and density creating additional built mass adjoining the countryside and would provide a permanent solid feature in the landscape. This would be contrary to policy CP3 and CC02.

- The area is unsustainable with no easy access to well stocked local shops, Doctors Surgery, or Post Office. Residents therefor would rely heavily on the car for proper facilities in other areas such as Woodley or Twyford and the extensive facilities in Reading. Sonning is not a 'transitional' site as suggested in the application.*
- The number of dwellings proposed will triple the number of car movements in and out of this site which would be contrary to policy CP6 of the Core Strategy.*
- An additional 57 dwelling in Sonning would increase the number of dwellings by 8% a substantial increase given the existing low-density development in Sonning. This would place an unacceptable demand on services and increase the level of traffic exiting onto the busy A4 via a limited access.*

ACCESS TO SHOPPING FACILITIES

Residents would be of an age where they would need to exercise additional caution when crossing the road. Data ignores the fact that a great deal of care and attention is required when crossing any road in Sonning due to the huge numbers of vehicles on its roads. This will be even more important if, as suggested, the residents of this proposed development, make use of the local transport, particularly as the 'average age' would appear to be '80'. It would be sheer folly to ask elderly residents to cross the A4 to access public transport and Bus services often cancelled without notice.

Access to meaningful shopping facilities within walking distance of the proposed site are very limited. Woodley Town Centre and Twyford Town Centre being the main options. Reading itself is the only option offering a realistic selection of shopping. Walking route to Woodley Town Centre is the only realistic shopping option open to pedestrians and each route each has the following flaws and would not encourage walking as the distances are too far, particularly as the applicants claims that the average age on a 'mature' development is around 80 years'.

- Route 1. Pound Lane to Butts Hill Road/Western Avenue. Narrow, two lane, railway bridge, no pedestrian footpath. Very dangerous 60-minute return walk. Close to traffic.*
- Route 2. Duffield Road. This route leads away from Woodley Town centre rather than towards it. Does provide access to 1 surgery, 1 Chemists and 1 shop with basic supplies. 40-minute return walk.*
- Route 3. Pound Lane to the A4. Provides route to Sonning Village, with limited facilities, involves crossing the busy A4 poor, uneven footpaths. Also route to Wee Waif and service station with small shop, basic supplies.*

40-minute return walk and crossing the A4 four times as footpath is on the northern side of the A4.

- Route 4. Pound Lane, West Drive Shepherds Hill. Easy 40-minute return walk to mini supermarket.*

- *Each of the above routes are heavily trafficked and associated with known health risks to pedestrians.*

None of the above options are 'convenient' encouraging residents to drive. This is contrary to the WBC Core Strategy policy CP6, Managing Travel Demand as the proposal fails to provide any of the travel criteria (a to g) included in CP6 which WBC require to grant planning permission. This is particularly true of: (e) Mitigate any adverse effects upon the local and strategic transport network that arise from the development proposed: (f) Enhance road safety and (g) Do not cause highway problems or lead to traffic related environmental problems.

IMPACT ON INFRASTRUCTURE

- *The development would be available to people over the age of 60, who would, apparently, no longer be working and the applicants bizarrely claim that there would be just 3 extra car movements from the development, at peak times, as compared with the current projected number of vehicles movement from the recently approved development of 7 dwellings. This is doubtful but if correct this only increase the potential for accidents.*
- *With potential occupation of the flats being at least 104 residents realistically residents are likely to make of use their cars at least every other day, possibly more. It is unrealistic to assume that traffic flows from the site will be little or no more than currently exist.*
- *Even if using the cycle paths, Cyclists would need to cross several very busy roads such as Pound Lane South, (where 7,000 vehicles travel in both directions each day and speeds of up to 60 mph have been recorded) to reach the nearest shop and facilities. Doubtless, even with the best intentions, residents would resort to using their cars given the unreliability of public transport, where busses are often cancelled without notice.*
- *If Parish Council are to believe that that the average age of residents will be 80 years, then it can also be assumed that these residents are more likely to rely heavily on Doctors services. The applicants themselves agree that the nearest Doctors surgeries are some distance away and would not be within acceptable walking distance for more fragile residents. Even if it is assumed that each flat will be occupied by two elderly people that will increase the pressure on existing surgeries by flooding the area with an additional 114 people, possibly more as 49 of the proposed flats are 2 bedroomed and only 8 are 1 bedroomed. The additional burden this will place on the limited Medical services in the area cannot be ignored.*

LOSS OF PRIVACY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- *The proposal includes removal of mature hedges and a number of trees, which currently offer a great deal of screening to adjoining properties. Without the screening the uncharacteristic 3-storey blocks will present a more urban aspect and the proposed balconies provide further opportunities for overlooking. This will be to the detriment of the privacy of adjoining residents, it will impact on their existing amenity and is likely to result in planning blight.*

For the above reasons Sonning Parish Council urges refusal of this application.

Clerk to the Council.

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