

Agenda Item 79.

Development Management Ref No	No weeks on day of committee	Parish	Ward	Listed by:
152192	16/13	Wokingham	Norreys	Major application

Applicant	Renaissance Retirement Ltd and Bancroft Developments		
Location	7 - 9 Wiltshire Road, Wokingham	Postcode	RG40 1TP
Proposal	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a block of 33 sheltered apartments for the elderly; construction of basement parking and surface parking spaces; associated integral refuse bin store, electric pavement car store and cycle store; modification of existing access		
Type	Major		
PS Category	1		
Officer	Justin Turvey		

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on 9 th December 2015
REPORT PREPARED BY	Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

SUMMARY

The application site contains 2 large detached dwellings set in spacious grounds, located by the junction of Wiltshire Road and Rectory Road. The surrounding area largely consists of two and two and a half storey flatted developments.

The proposal is a Major application for the demolition of 2 existing houses and the erection of a block of 33 sheltered apartments. The development would also provide communal facilities including an owners lounge, parking, including basement parking and landscaped gardens.

The surrounding area is largely characterised by large flat blocks, and the development would therefore be in keeping with this and would accord with Local Plan policy. The design and detailed appearance of the development would be in keeping with the surrounding development. The development would not result in overlooking or overbearing impacts to surrounding residential occupiers.

The development provides an acceptable level of parking, would not impact upon the peak hour capacity of the highway network, provides adequate visibility and has a good level of accessibility.

Although a number of trees would be removed to facilitate the development, replacement planting is proposed as well as a landscaping scheme. The development would not have a detrimental impact upon the ecological value of the site.

Therefore, the scheme is compliant with the development plan and is recommended for approval, subject to the completion of a Legal Agreement to provide a financial contribution towards affordable housing, and planning conditions as listed below.

PLANNING STATUS

- Major development location
- Thames Basin Heath SPA – 7 km
- Contaminated land consultation zone

- South East Water supply area
- TPO
- Affordable Housing Thresholds

RECOMMENDATION

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

A. Completion of Legal Agreement to secure a financial contribution of £205,228 towards affordable housing; and

B. Conditions and informatives:

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

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

2. This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings referenced:

- Location and Block Plan - ASP.15.063.001
- Proposed Site Plan - ASP.15.063.002B
- Proposed Basement Floor Plan - ASP.15.063.100A
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan - ASP.15.063.101A
- Proposed First Floor Plan- ASP.15.063.102
- Proposed Second Floor Plan- ASP.15.063.103
- Proposed Roof Plan- ASP.15.063.104
- Proposed Elevations - ASP.15.063.200
- Proposed Elevations - ASP.15.063.201
- Proposed Sections - ASP.15.063.203
- Proposed Car Park Sections - ASP.15.063.204

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by 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. Before the development hereby permitted is constructed above damp proof course level, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

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

4. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Any subsequent investigation/remedial/protective works deemed necessary by the LPA shall be carried out to agreed timescales and approved in writing by the local planning authority. If no contamination is encountered during the development correspondence confirming this fact shall be submitted to the LPA upon completion of the development.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination on the site is remediated to protect

the existing/proposed occupants of the application site and adjacent land
Relevant policy: NPPF Section 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) and Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3.

5. No development shall take place within the site until the applicant, or their agents or their successors in title, has secured and implemented 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: To ensure that any archaeological remains within the site are adequately investigated and recorded or preserved in situ in the interest of protecting the archaeological heritage of the borough.

Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB25.

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

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

7. There shall be no restriction on the use of the car parking spaces shown on the approved plans. Other than the allocated disabled and visitor spaces, all spaces shall remain unallocated.

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

8. No building shall be occupied until secure and covered parking for cycles has been provided in accordance with the approved drawing(s)/details. The cycle parking/ storage shall be permanently so-retained for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

9. No building shall be occupied until the access has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.

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

10. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General

Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no gates or barriers shall be erected at, or within 10 metres of, the vehicular access onto the highway.

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

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

11. The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the Construction Method Statement produced by Hackwood Group received 18/11/2015 unless the local planning authority agrees to any variation in writing.

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

12. The approved on-site collection area for refuse and recyclable materials shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation of the development hereby approved. The collection area and facilities shall be permanently retained as so-approved and used for no purpose other than the temporary storage of refuse and recyclable materials (on collection days only).

Reason: To ensure the efficient collection of waste materials whilst avoiding highway obstruction and loss of visual amenity, in the interests of a functional development, the character of the area, highway safety & convenience and the quality of the pedestrian environment.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.

13. Notwithstanding the approved plans, prior to the first occupation of any part of the approved development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure. Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

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

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

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

planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

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

15. a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until the protection measures set out in Barrell Tree Consultancy's Arboricultural Impact Appraisal and Method Statement (Ref.15115-AIA-DC) dated 23 July 2015 and Tree Protection Plan No.15115-BT2 for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been implemented in complete accordance with the approved details for the duration of the development (including, unless otherwise provided by the Approved Scheme) demolition, all site preparation work, tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery.

b) No development (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) shall commence until the local planning authority has been provided (by way of a written notice) with a period of no less than 7 working days to inspect the implementation of the measures identified in the Approved Scheme on-site.

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

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

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

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

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

17. All boundary treatments shall be implemented as per 'Hayley-Martin Gardens Wokingham Landscaping Masterplan drawing no. 1 revision 2'. The Close Board Fence as identified on the plans shall be 1.8m in height. The approved boundary treatments shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and highway safety.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6

18. Vegetation removal on site shall only be conducted outside the bird breeding season, March to August inclusive, or within 48 hours of an ecologist confirming the absence of breeding birds, if in March to August inclusive unless otherwise agreed by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is complied with and breeding birds, their nests and eggs are not harmed or damaged. Relevant Policy: Core Strategy policy CP7.

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

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

20. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until a scheme for proposed external lighting has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall set out steps that will be taken to ensure that external, zonal or security lighting does not cause a nuisance to local residents, including future residents of the site and shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents.

Relevant Policy: Core Strategy policy CP3.

21. The rear (east) facing windows in units 16 and 28 shall be fitted with obscured glass and shall be permanently so-retained.

To safeguard the residential amenities of neighbouring properties.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3

22. No development shall be carried out until an 'Employment and Skills Plan' has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Employment and Skills Plan.

Reason: To ensure training opportunities are available for local workers.

Relevant policy: Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB12

23. The occupation of the units hereby approved shall be limited to that of sheltered accommodation for the elderly only. For this purpose elderly is 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.

Reason: The number of parking spaces has been limited to reflect that required by persons aged 60 or over and as such, the occupancy needs to be restricted to this age group to ensure adequate parking to serve the development.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3.

24. Development shall not commence until a drainage strategy detailing any on and/or off site drainage works, has been submitted to and approved by, the local planning authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker. Other than the temporary dewatering drainage required during the construction of the approved basement car park, no discharge of foul or surface water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until the drainage works referred to in the strategy have been completed.

Reason: The development may lead to sewage flooding; to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to cope with the new development; and in order to avoid adverse environmental impact upon the community.

Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework and Core Strategy policy CP1.

25. No development shall take place until full details of the Drainage System(s) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall include results of groundwater monitoring undertaken at the site showing seasonal variation in groundwater levels in order to demonstrate whether the basement car park will be at risk of groundwater flooding and/or will have a detrimental impact on the risk of groundwater flooding to neighbouring properties.

Reason: In order to avoid adverse environmental impact upon the community.

Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework and Core Strategy policy CP1.

Informatives

1. The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.
2. This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act dated **[Insert appropriate date]**, the obligations in which relate to this development.
3. Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.
4. The Head of Technical Services at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham

[0118 9746000] should be contacted for the approval of the access construction details before any work is carried out within the highway (including verges and footways). This planning permission does NOT authorise the construction of such an access or works

5. The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. A revised Liability Notice will be issued if this amount changes. Anyone can formally assume liability to pay, but if no one does so then liability will rest with the landowner. There are certain legal requirements that must be complied with. For instance, whoever will pay the levy must submit an Assumption of Liability form and a Commencement Notice to Wokingham Borough Council prior to commencement of development. For more information see - <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/developers/cil/cil-processes/>
6. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of:
 - addressing concerns relating to highway safety; and
 - extending the determination period of the application to allow for additional information relating to drainage to be submitted for consideration.
 The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

PLANNING HISTORY

F/1997/6520	Application for erection of external chimney breast approved in 1997.
151689	Application for pre application advice for the erection of 29no retirement apartments with 21 underground parking spaces.

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Site Area	0.39 hectares
Existing residential units	2
Proposed units	33
Existing use	2 detached residential dwellings
Existing parking spaces	Minimum of 6
Proposed parking spaces	25

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Thames Water	No comments received
Natural England	No objection
WBC LUTT	No objection
WBC Highways	No objection subject to conditions (6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12)
WBC Biodiversity	No objection subject to condition (18) and informative (3)
WBC Trees and Landscape	Conditions suggested to overcome concerns (14, 15, 16, 17)
WBC Environmental Health	No objection subject to condition (4)
WBC Drainage	No objection subject to condition (25)
WBC Health and Wellbeing	No objections

WBC Conservation	No objections
Berkshire Archaeology	No objection subject to condition (5)
WBC Affordable Housing	No objection subject to Legal Agreement
Wokingham Town Council	No objection provided consideration is given to the impact of the volume of vehicle movements on highway safety and proposals to convert Rectory Road to two-way traffic.
Local Members	No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Six letters of objection with regards to the following:

- Parking provision is too low (See paragraph 21)
- Residents could be younger and therefore require more parking (See paragraph 21)
- Access is unsafe (See paragraph 19)
- Difficult to access the town centre/ lack of crossing facilities(See paragraph 20)
- Proposal is too large/ overbearing (See paragraph 16)
- Proposal is too high/ three storey development is out of keeping (See paragraph 12)
- Proposal will result in overlooking(See paragraph 17)
- Large number of flatted developments in town(See paragraph 11)
- Site is more appropriate for starter homes(See paragraph 10)
- Loss of habitats and diversity(See paragraph 33)

APPLICANTS POINTS

- Opportunity for high quality specialised residential development
- Contributes to local housing need and provides wider benefits in freeing up local housing stock
- Sustainable development close to town centre and local facilities
- Proposed development would blend into existing streetscene and would be of a high quality design with a traditional appearance
- All standards are met and the scheme provides appropriate access and parking
- Landscaped gardens provides attractive setting

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
	NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP2	Inclusive Communities
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP4	Infrastructure Requirements
	CP5	Housing mix, Density and Affordability
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP8	Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area

	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP14	Growth and renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC02	Development Limits
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC04	Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC07	Parking
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB05	Housing Mix
	TB06	Development of Private Residential Gardens
	TB07	Internal Space Standards
	TB09	Residential Accommodation for Vulnerable Groups
	TB12	Employment Skills Plan
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
	TB25	Archaeology
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	BDG	Borough Design Guide
Other Documents	OPHS	Strategy for housing for older people in Wokingham

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

1. The application relates to the erection of a two and a half storey building (three floors with the upper floor partially located within the roof) to provide 33 sheltered living apartments for the elderly, following the demolition of the two existing detached dwellings on the site. The 33 units would comprise 14 one-bedroom units and 19 two-bedroom units and a total of 25 parking spaces, 21 of which would be located within a basement.
2. The proposed building would form a 'T' shape, although as viewed from the street it would appear as three distinct sections consisting of two blocks at the front and a middle block further back within the site linked by a single storey element. The overall dimensions of the building would be 35m in width to the west (front) and 20m in width to the east (rear), 51m in depth and 11.5m in height with a pitched roof to the main block and the two smaller blocks at the front having pitched roofs with crowns.
3. Access would be taken from a modified access onto Wiltshire Road, with the

current access serving No. 7 being blocked up. An area of landscaping and four visitor and disabled spaces are proposed to the front of the site, as well as vehicular access to the basement parking area. Larger areas of amenity space would be located to the rear of the site. The development would result in the removal of a line of trees protected by TPO, with replacement planting proposed around the site.

Principle of Development:

4. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
5. The site is located within a major development location and within a settlement boundary and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers. Policy TB06 of the MDD outlines the positive contribution to the character of the area that development of private gardens must make, and the Borough Design Guide provides advice on best practice in terms of new development.
6. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy supports development that addresses the requirements of those with special needs and an aging population, particularly in terms of housing, health and wellbeing. The Strategy for Housing for Older People in Wokingham supports a range of types of accommodation to meet the needs of older people, including owner occupied schemes such as this. These issues are discussed in further detail below.

Character of the Area:

Density:

7. The density of the proposed development would be 82 dwellings per hectare (dph). This is in excess of the adjoining flatted developments at Wiltshire Place (65 dph) and Danesfield (50 dph) but less than the supported living scheme at Piggott Court to the south (100 dph). It is also comparable with other schemes within the town centre and a lower density than the retirement apartments permitted at Wellington Road (Cantley Lodge Hotel) in 2014 (86 dph). In this instance, it is considered that the density is indicative of the particular use and the focus on smaller units, rather than an indication of overdevelopment.

Housing Mix

8. The proposed 33 flats would incorporate the following mix:
 - 14 x one-bedroom units

- 19 x two-bedroom units

9. Given that this is a specialist retirement development which would not be expected to produce units larger than two-bedrooms, plus the applicant's agreement to provide a financial contribution towards the off-site provision of affordable housing which can contribute towards the provision of larger properties, the proposed housing mix is considered to be acceptable.
10. Although objection has been raised on the basis that the development is not for affordable starter homes, the proposal does meet an identified housing need, would provide a contribution towards affordable housing (which could assist in the provision of larger and other types of properties) and would free up existing housing stock within the Borough that would otherwise be occupied by the residents of this proposed development. There is therefore no objection on this basis.

Character, Design and Layout

11. The application site is located along Wiltshire Road, at the junction of Rectory Road. Along Wiltshire Road and, to a lesser extent, Rectory Road, the original character consisting of large detached dwellings in spacious grounds has gradually been replaced by flatted developments, albeit still spacious and set in generous grounds. Other than the two dwellings which are proposed for redevelopment as part of this application, there are a series of modern flats for approximately 100m north (as far as Wiltshire Drive) and 90m south (as far as Norreys Avenue). As such, the development on the application site is currently somewhat out character with the rest of the street, and the principle of a flatted development is considered to be acceptable at this site.
12. The flat blocks to the north at Wiltshire Place are two and a half storeys and vary between approximately 15m and 20m in width. The buildings are articulated by the use of projecting bays and gables, which serve to reduce the overall mass of the buildings, and by a contrasting brick and render finish. The proposed scheme continues this theme, with the building designed to appear as three separate two and a half storey blocks with a single storey glazed link. Although the three elements would actually be linked at all floors, this would not be readily apparent from the street as the rear block is set over 30m back from the road. The two 'blocks' at the front of the site would measure approximately 15m in width, and would therefore be in keeping with existing development along the street. As per Wiltshire Place, the blocks are well articulated through projecting bays and gables and this serves to reduce their apparent mass. The overall height of the development (11.5m) would be slightly more than the Wiltshire Place development (10.5m) although this would not be detrimental to the streetscene given the scale of the buildings and the space around them.
13. The two blocks fronting the site would be set back from the street by between 14m and 22m behind existing trees and a landscaped frontage. This further serves to reduce the impact of the development on the streetscene, and is in keeping with the existing set back of the houses on the site and the flats at Wiltshire Place. It is also a more generous set back from the street than Danesfield or Piggotts Place to the south, which are set between 10m – 12m back from the street.

14. The applicant has proposed traditional design features, such as the use of sash windows and brick and render for the external finish, which is in keeping with the existing development at Wiltshire Place.
15. As the development would be on private residential garden land, the scheme falls to be assessed against Policy TB06 of the MDD. It is considered that the proposed scheme has an acceptable relationship with the existing built form and spaces within the surrounding area, has a layout which integrates with the surrounding area, is compatible with the general building height within the surrounding area, proposes materials and elevational details which would be of a high quality, and where appropriate and proposes a layout which minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and is therefore in full accordance with the policy, as well as the Borough Design Guide.

Residential Amenities:

16. The Borough Design Guide advises that a flank to boundary separation distance of 2m should be provided for development over two storeys. The application proposes a separation distance of 4m to the northern boundary (resulting in a separation distance of 8m flank to flank between buildings) and 5m to the southern boundary (resulting in a separation distance of 20m flank to flank between buildings) which is well in excess of guidance. A back to back separation distance of 30m is required by the Borough Design Guide - the closest residential dwellings to the proposed building are 43m away to the east (No. 8 Coronation Square) and 47m to the south (2A Norreys Avenue) and the proposed building would therefore have a significantly greater separation distance than stated in guidance. None of the proposed units would be in close enough proximity to neighbouring properties to have a harmful overbearing impact or result in loss of light to neighbours.
17. At both first and second floor level, a secondary window to a living room is proposed in the rear block. Although the properties along this section of Norreys Avenue have significant rear gardens depths, given that the proposed flat block would come closer to their rear gardens, it is considered appropriate to include a condition to ensure that these first and second floor rear windows be obscure glazed. This would not harm the amenity of future occupiers as these are secondary windows to the rooms. Subject to this, the design of the building and the separation distances ensure that no unacceptable overlooking would occur as a result of the development.

Access and Movement:

18. The existing dwellings generate around 12 person movements per day. The proposed use would generate approximately 56 movements per day. Whilst this is a significant increase above the existing use, the trips would be distributed throughout the day and the four or five peak hour movements as a result of the development would not impact upon the capacity of the Wiltshire Road/Rectory Road junction or the surrounding highway network.
19. The existing access to No. 7 Wiltshire Road would be blocked up, with the access to No. 9 upgraded to accommodate the development. Visibility to the

north (right) for vehicles leaving the site is not ideal given the slight bend in the road before the access; however, the Council's Highways Officer has confirmed it allows for adequate visibility and, in any event, vehicles would be slowing at this point as they approach the junction. Visibility from the south is acceptable.

20. Resident concerns have been raised regarding the accessibility of the site in terms of direct access to the town centre. In response, the applicant has prepared a 'Report on Facilities on Routes to Town Centre' which considers pedestrian routes to the town centre and local facilities and whether improvements to routes are required. The report notes that access to the town centre and Waitrose via Rectory Road is generally good, and that there is an existing pedestrian crossing along Wiltshire Road. Access to the town centre via Rose Street or the southern section of Wiltshire Road leading to Peach Street is acceptable for pedestrians, but not ideal for mobility scooters or wheelchairs given the narrower footpaths; however access to the town centre for mobility scooters is possible via Rectory Road. Highways therefore confirm that the development has a good level of accessibility for pedestrian and mobility scooters or wheelchair trips.
21. The application proposes the provision of 21 spaces in an underground car park, along with 4 spaces at the front of the building. Research carried out on similar developments indicates that ownership is likely to be relatively high to begin with, then drop off in the future, and that a development of this size is likely to require a total of 15 spaces on maturity. The surface spaces are proposed for visitor and disabled parking and it is considered that, subject to a condition to ensure that the spaces remain unallocated (Condition 7), the number and location of spaces would be acceptable. Given that the reduced parking figure is accepted on the basis of the age of occupants meaning they are less likely to require the use of a car, Condition 23 is proposed, which restricts the age of occupants of the development to at least 60 years of age.
22. Space has also been provided for up to 10 mobility scooters, along with a charging point. Although research of similar developments indicates that 1 cycle parking space would be required, the applicant has proposed 6 spaces, and the provision and retention of cycle parking is proposed to be conditioned (Condition 8).
23. A Construction Method Statement was submitted as additional information by the applicant. Highways confirm that this document is well written and acceptable, and it proposed that Condition 11 is included to ensure that development is carried out in accordance with it.

Flooding and Drainage:

24. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is recognised as being at low risk of fluvial flooding and at very low risk of surface water flooding. However, groundwater monitoring is required to demonstrate that both the proposed development and surrounding properties are not at increased risk from groundwater flooding as a result of the development given that the construction of the basement car park has the potential to impact on groundwater flows beneath the surface and in turn increase the risk of groundwater flooding to nearby properties, depending on the groundwater levels beneath the site.

25. Subject to the receipt of this information through the submission of details under Condition 25, the development is considered to be acceptable in relation to flood risk and drainage.

Landscape and Trees:

26. There are a number of trees on site, including a line of conifers (Lawson Cypress) protected under TPO 658/1994 which form the boundary between Nos. 7 and 9. The proposal would require the removal of a number of trees on the site including some protected under the TPO. Whilst this is considered to be unfortunate, some of these trees are recommended to be removed on arboricultural grounds, and the Lawson Cypresses, despite being protected, do not make a significant contribution to the streetscene, being largely hidden from view, and are not particularly well planted or good examples of the species. The site does have a significant number of existing trees along its boundaries, including a number of Beech trees along the rear (eastern) boundary. The boundary planting would be supplemented with additional planting and an arboricultural statement has been submitted to demonstrate that the development could be accommodated on the site without significant impact on the trees to be retained.

27. Notwithstanding the protected trees at the rear of the site, it is considered that the most important contribution to the amenity of the area comes from the trees at the street frontage, which are significant Maple, Oak and Beech trees. These would all be retained, and additional tree planting is proposed to the frontage.

28. A draft hard and soft landscaping plan has been submitted. This demonstrates that a high quality landscaped scheme could be provided, and full details are required by condition.

29. Overall, the proposal would be appropriately landscaped and replacement planting is proposed. Additionally, the scheme would be better landscaped and contain more trees than the adjoining Wiltshire Place development. As such, there is no objection to the development in terms of trees and landscaping, subject to further details secured through conditions (Conditions 13, 14, 15, 16).

Environmental Health:

30. There is no known pollution or contamination affecting the site; however, the proposal relates to a sensitive land use, and therefore the Council's Environmental Health Officer has recommended a precautionary approach, including a planning condition (Condition 5) in the event that any contaminants are found on site. Subject to this condition, there is no objection to the development on environmental health grounds.

Amenity Space for future occupiers:

31. The Borough Design Guide advises that flats should have a good level of access to amenity space including a communal garden and balconies for first floor flats. It is considered both of these objectives are met and that the amenity space provided would be suitable for typical garden activities – the application

submissions also show provision of a petanque court and paths around the garden. Whilst it is acknowledged there would be some shading from the existing trees, this is limited to the rear part of the gardens and not considered sufficient basis to warrant refusing the application.

Internal Space Standards

32. Since 1st October 2015 national space standards have been in place. Although these are optional, due to policy TB07 of the MDD, developments in Wokingham must adhere to these new national space standards. The proposal meets the 50 sqm requirement for a one-bedroom flat (the proposed one bedroom flats are all over 63 sqm), and the 70 sqm requirement for a two-bedroom flat (the proposed one bedroom flats are all over 75 sqm). All the units have suitable circulation and potential storage space as well as windows to every room. There are also large areas providing communal facilities such as the 'owners lounge'. As a result, it is considered that the development would provide an acceptable level of accommodation for future occupiers.

Biodiversity:

33. An ecological appraisal of the site has been undertaken which concludes that the development is unlikely to affect bats, and the Council's Ecologist agrees with its findings. An informative (Informative 3) is proposed in the event that bats are found. The survey work undertaken has identified two locations on site where birds could nest during the breeding season, and accordingly a condition is proposed (Condition 18) to ensure that clearance works is supervised or takes place outside of the bird breeding season. Subject to this condition, there is no objection to the proposal in terms of ecological impact.

Archaeology:

34. Due to potential archaeological remains in the area, the Council's archaeological consultant has recommended a condition (5) be placed requiring the approval of a written scheme of investigation prior to development occurring on site.

Employment Skills:

35. Policy TB12 of the MDD requires major applications to demonstrate how they can encourage the use of local skills and employment. Condition 22 would require the submission of an Employment Skills Plan (ESP) prior to the commencement of development. Following discussions with the applicant, a draft ESP has been submitted and is currently being considered by the Economic Sustainability Team.

Community Infrastructure Levy and Affordable Housing:

36. **Community Infrastructure Levy:** As the proposal is for the construction of new residential development, it would be a CIL liable development. The CIL charge for new residential development is set at £365 per square metre for any net increase in residential floor space.

37. **Affordable Housing:** In accordance with Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy, the

development would be expected to provide 30% of the units as affordable housing (equating to 9 units) on site. However, it would not be possible to provide affordable housing on site as the scheme is not large enough to provide a separate block of housing, and 'pepper potting' of the affordable units would not be possible due to the significantly higher management charges levied on occupiers in schemes of this type. This argument has been accepted on other recent private care home schemes of this type, including Cantley Lodge (F/2014/0981). The Council's Economic Sustainability Team agrees that in this instance it would be appropriate to accept a financial contribution as a commuted sum in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision. This would assist in enabling the provision of larger affordable units elsewhere within the Borough.

38. The 'Affordable Housing Statement' submitted alongside the planning application indicated that the development would not be able to provide a contribution towards the provision of off-site affordable housing. However, the viability has been independently assessed and it has been found that a viable scheme could still be delivered were a financial contribution of £205,228 provided. The applicant has agreed this figure, and therefore a commuted sum of £205,228 for the provision of affordable housing will be included within a S106 Legal Agreement.

CONCLUSION

The application is for the demolition of 2 existing houses and the erection of a block of 33 sheltered apartments including communal facilities, parking and landscaped gardens.

The proposal accords with the Council's policy relating to the development of residential gardens, is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area and has an acceptable design and detailed appearance. It would not result in an unacceptable impact on neighbouring residential occupiers.

The development provides an acceptable level of parking, would not impact upon the peak hour capacity of the highway network, provides adequate visibility and has a good level of accessibility.

Although a number of trees would be removed to facilitate the development, these are of limited amenity value and replacement planting is proposed as well as a landscaping scheme. The development would not have a detrimental impact upon the ecological value of the site.

The application is before committee as a major development. The scheme is compliant with the development plan and is recommended for approval, subject to the completion of a Legal Agreement to provide a financial contribution towards affordable housing, and planning conditions as listed above.

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