

Agenda Item 9.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
230743	26/06/23	Woodley	Bulmershe and Whitegates

Applicant	Mr Hardeep Hans
Site Address	Library Parade, Crockhamwell Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3LX
Proposal	Full application for the proposed creation of a mixed use building consisting of the retention of the existing 3 no. retail stores at ground floor level and the addition of 14 no. apartments on new first, second and third floor levels, including the erection of three and four storey rear extensions with associated car parking, cycle and bin stores, following partial demolition of the existing building
Type	Full
Officer	Connie Davis
Reason for determination by committee	Major application

FOR CONSIDERATION BY REPORT PREPARED BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 14 June 2023 Assistant Director – Place and Growth
RECOMMENDATION	<p>APPROVAL subject to conditions and Informatives & completion of S106 legal agreement to secure the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordable Housing - Employment Skills Plan <p>ii) Refuse full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed within three months of the date of this resolution (unless officers on behalf of the Assistant Director – Place and Growth agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)</p> <p>The S106 to include the following heads of terms:</p> <p><u>Affordable Housing</u></p> <p>To secure an in lieu affordable housing contribution of £166,644.47</p> <p><u>Employment, Skills and Training</u></p> <p>To secure a construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan or equivalent financial contribution in accordance with Policy TB12 of the MDD and based on the value of the Construction Industry Training Board Benchmark.</p>

SUMMARY

The application relates to the Library Parade building within Woodley Town Centre. The proposal seeks to convert the existing first floor offices and extend the existing building to provide 14 residential units – a mix of 5 x 2-bed and 9 x 1-bed apartments – whilst retaining the existing retail units at ground floor. Parking will be from the rear whilst access to the flats will be from the front and rear of the site.

A similar proposal was refused at committee on the 8 March 2023 for the following reason:

By reason of its proximity to Sandford Court, the proposed extension to the existing building would result in overlooking to neighbouring occupiers of second floor south facing flats, causing unacceptable harm to their private residential amenity. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the NPPF, policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and the Borough Design Guide SPD.

This revised application seeks to overcome those concerns through reducing the number of dwellings and proximity of the third floor to Sandford Court. It should also be noted that Members of the Planning Committee undertook a site visit for the refused scheme.

The proposal continues to result in a satisfactory outcome on traffic and parking grounds because of its town centre location. The proposed changes to the built form are considered in keeping with the street scene in terms of scale, mass and design, whilst improving the public realm and one of the main entrances to the town centre precinct. In the context of a dense town centre location, there is also adequate resident and neighbour amenity, having sought to positively address the reason for refusal for the earlier similar scheme (ref. 222367) which centred around overlooking concerns for nearby residents in Sandford Court. Whilst there is a loss of office floor space in the town centre, this is outweighed by the provision of residential dwellings. The NPPF is clear that where a development does not result in significant harm and is sustainable, it should be supported.

The location of the development is considered to be highly sustainable and would allow easy and safe access to facilities and services. The proposal would provide public benefits by securing a policy compliant financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing as well as securing an employments skills plan. It is also noted that securing the delivery of such suitable and sustainable sites, is far more preferable than accepting unsatisfactory, less sustainable sites elsewhere in the borough. Officers are therefore recommending the application for approval, subject to the conditions listed and a S106 legal agreement to secure onsite affordable housing and the employment skills plan.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application Number	Proposal	Decision Date
222367	Full application for the proposed creation of a mixed use building consisting of the retention of the existing 3 no. retail stores at ground floor level and the addition of 16 no.	Refused by the Planning Committee at their meeting on 8 th February 2023. The reason for refusal reads as follows:

	apartments on new first, second and third floor levels, including the erection of three and four storey rear extensions with associated car parking, cycle and bin stores, following partial demolition of the existing building	<i>By reason of its proximity to Sandford Court, the proposed extension to the existing building would result in overlooking to neighbouring occupiers of second floor south facing flats, causing unacceptable harm to their private residential amenity. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the NPPF, policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and the Borough Design Guide SPD.</i>
160309	Full application for the proposed change of use of part of first floor from Gymnasium (Use Class D2) to office (Use Class B1)	Approved 17/03/2016
100497	Proposed erection of 3 air conditioning condenser units onto rear wall facing goods yard	Approved 23/09/2010
F/2008/1536	Change of use of first floor from A1 (Offices) to Yoga & Pilates Studio (D2)	Approved 20/08/2008
F/2004/3622	Proposed change of use of unit on first floor from A2 (professional and financial services) to D2 (assembly and leisure) to be used as a fitness centre	Approved 17/02/2005

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION	
Proposed units	14 residential units
Number of affordable units proposed	In lieu financial contribution equivalent of 2.8 residential units (£166,644.47 index-linked)
Previous land use	Retail (ground floor) and office (first floor) (Class E)
Existing parking spaces	18 parking spaces
Proposed parking spaces	10 parking spaces
CONSTRAINTS	Major Development Location – Woodley Woodley Town Centre Primary shopping area Potentially contaminated land consultation zone

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
WBC Transport	No objection
WBC Ecology	No response received
NatureSpace Ecology (Newts)	No objection
WBC Drainage	No objection
WBC Property Services	No response received
WBC Sports Development (Places and Neighbourhoods)	No response received
WBC Environmental Health	No objection
Southern Gas Networks	No objection
SSE	No objection
Thames Water	No objection
WBC Economic Prosperity & Place (Community Infrastructure)	No objection subject to securing an in lieu financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing
WBC Green Infrastructure	No response received
WBC Landscape and Trees	No objection
WBC Planning Policy	No response received
WBC Health and Wellbeing	No response received
Crime Prevention Design Advisor	No response received
NHS Wokingham	No response received
WBC Community Safety	No response received
Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service	Observation made (see para 25)
WBC Education (School Place Planning)	No response received
WBC Cleaner and Greener (Waste Services)	No response received
WBC Economic Development (Skills and Employment)	No objection subject to Employment and Skills Plan contribution being secured

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council: Objection on the following grounds:

- Overlooking impact onto Beechwood Primary School (**see para 54**)
- Proposal removes existing car park provision for occupants of the retail units (see para) - Unwelcome 'wind tunnel' effect between the development and neighbouring buildings (**see para 63**)

Local Members: No comments received.

Neighbours: 6 letters of objection from local residents on the following grounds:

- Construction of the development with regards to noise, dust, privacy and health (**see para 89**)
- Concern about privacy – there would be a clear line of sight between both buildings from the proposed balconies (**see para 52**)
- Inadequate parking available for those who live and work in the area and for the new flats and ground floor retail (**see paras 64-78 for parking matters**)
- Extra traffic into precinct area when car park charges are due to increase (**see paras 61-74 for parking and highway matters**)

- The site will also impede deliveries to the site once the electric fence is installed and will further restrict the turning circle in our service area (**see paras 64-76 for parking and highway matters**)
- The building would be built next to the back garden of Beechwood Bungalow and would affect this neighbouring property's natural light and would be overlooked from proposed bathroom windows (**see paras, 54, 58**)
- Library Parade will become a wind tunnel with decreased light and general appeal which would affect the current retail units (**see paras 58 and 63**)
- Cllr Shirley Boyt raised the following comments: Disabled parking has been located at the furthest point possible from the lift. These would be better suited closer to the building (**see para 41**)

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework
National Design Guide
National Planning Practice Guidance

Core Strategy (CS)

CP1 – Sustainable Development
 CP3 – General Principles for Development
 CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability
 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand
 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
 CP13 – Town Centres and Shopping
 CP15 – Employment Development
 CP17 – Housing Delivery

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
 CC06 – Noise
 CC07 – Parking
 CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
 TB05 – Housing Mix
 TB07 – Internal Space Standards
 TB12 – Employment Skills Plan
 TB15 – Major Town, and Small Town/District Centre development
 TB16 – Development for Town Centre Uses
 TB20 – Service Arrangements and Deliveries for Employment and Retail Use
 TB21 – Landscape Character

Other

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
 CIL Guidance + 123 List
 Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
 Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development

1. The proposal involves the partial conversion and change of use of an extensions to the existing Library Parade building, to accommodate 14 residential units (5 x 2-bed and 9 x 1-bed apartments). The existing ground floor retail units are to be retained. More specifically, it comprises the following:
 - Retention of the ground floor retail units
 - Change of use of the first floor from Class E offices to comprise 6 x 1-bed residential units and 1 x 2 bed unit (duplex)
 - Demolition of existing roof and addition of two floor levels to the main building to accommodate 3 x 1 bed units and 3 x 2 bed units at second floor (one of which is the duplex) and 2 x 2 beds at third floor
 - Erection of a three storey extension to the rear to accommodate the 2 x 1-bed & 1 x 2-bed residential units (units 2, 3 and 1 respectively)
 - Erection of a four storey extension to the rear to accommodate lift shaft and staircase
 - Provision of 10 car parking spaces including 2 disabled spaces and six EV charging points, 17 cycle stands (with 4 retained for the retail stores). In addition, bin stores are proposed. Alterations to the existing car park access and changes to the existing boundary treatments at the rear
 - Internal works to suit

Site Description and its Surroundings:

2. The proposal site comprises a 1980's two storey building located within the Woodley Town Centre, which currently hosts 3no retail units at ground floor and offices above. There is an existing access and car parking area to the rear of the building. The building addresses Library Parade and is located in a prominent location at an entranceway into the town centre. It therefore functions as a focal point within the area.
3. The building sits opposite to a three storey mixed use building with a Lidl supermarket on the ground floor, a surgery and residential uses on the first and second floors respectively. A public car park exists to the east of the site and two single storey buildings to the south-east of the site, comprising of the public library and Citizen's Advice Woodley. Immediately to the south is a residential bungalow and the Beechwood Primary School further to this. To the west is another three storey mixed use building facing the main shopping precinct. There are no listed buildings on or adjoining the site, it is not located within a Conservation Area, and is not within an area of high flood risk.

Principle of Development:

4. Section 38(6) of The Planning and compulsory purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the Development Plan comprises the Core Strategy (CS) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD), which are read alongside the NPPF. The MDD 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. Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map. Policy CP9 of the CS sets out that development proposals located within development limits will be acceptable in principle, having regard to service provisions associated with the major, modest and limited categories.
6. The application site is located within a major development location and within a settlement boundary; as such, the principle of the development is acceptable providing it complies with local and national policy and there are no other material considerations which dictate otherwise. Core Strategy policy CP3 states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, as layout, built form height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of a high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.
7. The Council currently accepts that its demonstrable housing land supply is less than five years. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that where a local authority unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, the most important policies relating to the application may be viewed as being out of date. It continues to advise that unless there are specific policies in the NPPF protecting the land subject to the application, that permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF (tilted balance).
8. The principle of the proposed development within Woodley Town Centre is supported by the Local Plan. However, Policy CC01, CC02 and CP9 of the Local Plan are currently considered to be out of date given the Council's inability to demonstrate 5 years' worth of deliverable sites. As such the weight afforded to these policies are reduced in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Notwithstanding this, the development would represent sustainable development in terms of the principle of development where there would not be any other material considerations which would otherwise make this development unacceptable. As such, the principle of the proposed development would remain in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework whereby the housing strategy policies of the Local Plan are out of date.

Loss of office floorspace:

9. Policy CP13 of the CS requires the protection of retail centres, with paragraph 4.67 aiming to maintain the range of activities so that they are at the heart of sustainable communities. Proposals leading to the loss of town centre uses (including offices) will not be allowed unless it is substantiated that there is no deficiency in the catchment. Policy CP15 of the Core Strategy states there should not be any overall net loss of Class B floorspace within the borough.
10. Policy TB15 of the MDD Local Plan indicates that development should be of a scale and form that is compatible with the retail character of the centre and its role in the hierarchy of retail centres; that it retains or increases the provision of Class E (former class A1) (shops) uses in primary shopping frontages; that it contributes to the provision of day and evening/night-time uses and is compatible with other uses; and enhances vitality and viability. It also states the Council will support the provision of self-contained

dwellings in vacant or under used units above ground-floor town centre uses where a suitable/appropriate level of amenity for occupants can be provided.

11. The proposal change of use of the first floor to residential would result in a modest loss of 319sqm or 100% of the above ground office floorspace of the building. It is understood there have been difficulties with attracting tenants for the offices and consequently the use has become dormant and unviable. The loss of office floorspace requires consideration of whether (a) it would impact the range of activities in the town centre; and (b) it would impact upon the quantum and range of employment floorspace across the borough.
12. In relation to the first question, the proposals would retain the ground floor retail, so there would be no policy conflict in that regard. There would be a modest loss of town centre use in the form of office floor space. However, this would be replaced by 14 residential units in an accessible location, and this is supported by policy TB15 of the MDD Local Plan, where there is an intent to provide day and evening/night-time uses. It would also arguably introduce more people into the town centre to contribute to its vitality and viability.
13. Moving to the second question, the proposal would lead to the modest loss of 319sqm of B1 employment floorspace. This is a relatively modest reduction in the context of policy CP15, and based on the latest monitoring information, unlikely to lead to a net loss of employment B use floorspace across the borough. The Central FEMA (Functional Economic Market Area) Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) report (October 2016) identifies a recommended net office space requirement for 2013-2036 of at least 93,305m² based on the labour supply approach (although this study has not factored in the allocated Science Park south of the M4) and this suggests the need to retain existing floorspace, not only in town centres.
14. Nonetheless, the Assessment indicates that the rise in the level of floorspace to meet forecast employment growth in the Borough over the Plan period is not being met through the intensification of use brought about through the redevelopment of existing employment areas and new allocations, as envisaged by paragraph 4.70 of the Core Strategy. The floorspace is also continually eroded by Class MA office conversions, thereby undermining the intent of the policy.
15. The site is outside any Core Employment Area, as defined in policy CP15; however, it maintains an alternative site and size of employment land within the borough. While the principle of seeking to maintain a variety of employment floorspace provision is an important consideration, it is noted that the site is located close to the Core Employment Areas of Headley Road East and Winnersh Triangle, both of which provide higher quality and more appropriately located office development.
16. Whilst the WBC Planning Policy officer has not commented on this current application, they raised no objections to the former application at the site (ref. 222367) which proposed the loss of the same amount of office space. As such, it is reasonable to conclude they would also not object to this application based on the modest loss of town centre use. On the basis of the above assessment and on balance, the small loss of office floorspace is not objected to in principle.

Retail frontage:

18. Policy TB15 of the MDD Local Plan states that Class E (former class A1) uses should be retained in the primary frontage and A3 uses in secondary shopping frontages. The site is within a primary retail frontage. The proposal would retain the existing retail units at ground floor, so that it would not alter the provision of shops along this primary shopping frontage. No objection is therefore raised.

Density and Dwelling Mix:

19. The NPPF seeks to 'boost significantly the supply of housing' and deliver a wide range of homes, of different types and tenures. Achieving an efficient use of the land within the context of any central and sustainably located site is a key priority both at a national and local level. Paragraph 69 of the NPPF recognises that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out relatively quickly.
20. Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy and policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan require an appropriate mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes so that the housing needs of the community are met. They also require an appropriate dwelling density and R10 of the Borough Design Guide SPD seeks to ensure that the development achieves an appropriate density in relation to local character. A density of around 180 dwellings/hectare is appropriate for this town centre location. No objection is raised in this regard.
21. With regard to dwelling mix, there is a clear departure from the policy requirements with the proposal having a high concentration of 1 and 2 bed units. However, the intent of the Council's policies is to provide a mix of accommodation to cater for the varied needs of the community and to ensure that it is provided where is needed. It is also recognised that this is a town centre site in which a smaller unit scheme such as flats is considered to be appropriate. On this aspect, the proposed mix is supported because of the affordable housing contribution and the town centre location (with a corresponding level of parking provision reflective of the easy access to facilities and services).

Character of the Area:

22. Section 12 of the NPPF 'Achieving well-designed places', reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development, by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high-quality places. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF includes the need for new design to function well and add to the quality of the surrounding area, establish a strong sense of place, and respond to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
23. The Government's National Design Guide 2019 (NDG) is clear that well-designed places contribute to local distinctiveness. This may include introducing built form and appearance that adds new character and difference to places.
24. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high-quality design. R9 and NR5 of the Borough Design Guide SPD note that height, bulk and massing should respond to the local context and the prevailing heights in the area.

25. The site is located within the heart of Woodley Town Centre and therefore is surrounded by extensive 20th century buildings with varying roof forms ranging from flat roofs, elongated hips to large crown roofs. The majority of the buildings that line both sides of Crockhamwell Road and Library Parade are at least 3-4 storeys in height. Overall, there is little architectural uniformity to the Town Centre, nor any prevailing vernacular which must be replicated.
26. Library Parade to the front of the site is on the main pedestrian route through to the Woodley commercial centre pedestrian area from Lidl and one of the main town centre car parks. There is also a pedestrian access to Beechwood Primary School to the south of the site meaning it is a prominent location within Woodley centre.
27. In terms of layout, the proposed development is considered to build on and respect the existing layout of surrounding development, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between the building and spaces in front of it. At ground and first floor levels, the building frontage and footprint of the existing building would remain unchanged, whilst the new second and third levels have been designed to be set back from the main building line, thus reducing the visual dominance of these extensions. This is the same design approach followed for the Lidl building opposite, where the top floor flats are also stepped back from the building façade.
28. It is also noted that the proposed retail/commercial units to the frontage at ground floor would continue to provide welcome activity to the public realm within the Library Parade, and the proposed development now provides welcome natural surveillance of the adjacent parking areas and pedestrian areas between buildings with the addition of active street frontages given by the addition of windows and balconies on all elevations. The only exception is the third-floor northern elevation (front facing) that has bricked window detailing only (sometimes known as 'tax windows'). This is to overcome overlooking concerns with nearby properties (which will be discussed later in the report). Whilst this level would not be glazed, it would have some architectural detailing as opposed to a blank façade. Owing to its high level, it is not considered to be an overly dominant element of the proposal and at the natural eye level, a good level of glazing and architectural detailing would be provided to ensure the design of the building is appropriate and of a good quality. Following the introduction of bricked windows only on the third floor Library Parade elevation, the Fire Authority raised an observation regarding the design stating that it needs to ensure that the percentage of openings on all sides of the building meets the requirements of Approved Document B for the prevention of fire spread to neighbouring buildings. The applicant confirmed that they consider the proposal complies in this respect. This would be clarified at Building Regulations stage.
29. To the rear, the plans show the proposed rear extension considerably set back from the southern boundary, whilst to the east, the main façade is also stepped back with balconies at first floor. This allows for significant space between the extensions and adjoining buildings to maintain the existing sense of openness, so that the proposal does not appear visually dominant against the street scene and the Woodley Library building itself. In this regard, the proposal is considered to achieve a positive relationship with all surrounding buildings.
30. In terms of scale, the application site occupies a prominent position within the Parade, adjoining varying scales of built form. These consist of large plain 3-4 storey rectangular buildings to the north and west, whilst single storey rectangular buildings

are located to the south-east, including the Woodley Library and Beechwood Primary School. The proposal would see a 4 storey element to north with the addition of two levels over the existing building, whilst stepping down to a three storey extension to the rear which would be about the same height (9.5m) as the ridge of the existing building, and considerably set back from the south and eastern boundaries to alleviate any sense of visual dominance against the single storey buildings on that side.

31. Furthermore, the overall height of the existing building as extended would be circa 12.4m, comparable to the height of the Lidl building at 11.9m. When considering the general scale and proportions of this proposal, the building will be primarily read from Library Parade and the public car park to the east of the site. In responding to this context, the scheme is considered to maintain a respective scale to those buildings surrounding it, visually reducing the mass as seen from the street and approach and so is considered acceptable.
32. Turning to the detailed design of the building, the local area benefits from a contrast between more traditional buildings (Shopping Precinct) and modern styles of the Lidl building. Overall there is a mix of design palette and materials, with little architectural uniformity to the Town Centre. The proposal has deeply recessed balconies, which are considered to add depth to the façade whilst enabling the building to front the public realm. The stacking of windows and balconies at ground, first and second floor level add welcome rhythm and verticality to the facades. The proposal also retains the ground floor retail units which feature large areas of glazing, an element that already adds interest to the public realm and create a visual focus within the Parade. The appearance of the extensions and proposed materials would reflect the style and materials of the existing building and traditionally used within the local area (brickwork), as well as flat roofs which are predominant within the town centre precinct. Notwithstanding, in order to ensure that final features are acceptable, it is considered necessary to impose condition 3 requiring materials to be submitted for approval.
33. Overall, the scheme is viewed as improving the character and appearance of the building in the streetscape and is supported. The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of scale, height, massing and design, without any detriment to visual amenity or local character.

Housing Affordability:

34. Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy, Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan and the Affordable Housing SPD specify an affordable housing rate of 20% for any development involving 5-14 dwellings or land with a total area of 0.16 hectares or more on previously developed land. The application site meets this threshold and therefore there is a requirement for the provision of affordable housing.
35. To meet the requirements of Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy, a minimum of 20% of the total number of units (net) should be provided as affordable housing. This equates to 2.8 units here. Due to fact that an on-site contribution would result in a mix of tenure in the flatted block, the only practical means of delivery for the affordable housing is through a commuted sum. The Affordable Housing SPD (2013) supports this notes that schemes with a small number of units (that would be affordable units) may have difficulty providing on site provision. This approach is supported by the Affordable Housing Officer.

36. Based on the Viability Study undertaken by Level Ltd, the Council's approach to calculating commuted sums for affordable housing is based on the difference in the residual development value of a scheme without on-site affordable housing and the same scheme with on-site affordable housing. We have therefore based the calculation of the commuted sum to accord more to that within the Affordable Housing SPD. The commuted sum sought in-lieu of 2.8 units is £166,644.47 index-linked towards affordable housing in the borough. The applicant is agreeable to this contribution. A policy compliance quantum of affordable housing therefore constitutes a significant and tangible public benefit of the proposal and provides a welcome contribution to local affordable housing needs in the borough. The provision and delivery of the affordable housing element of the scheme would be secured through the associated S106 legal agreement.

Accessibility (including The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010))

37. 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. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy also seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities, including for aged persons, children and the disabled. 10–20% of all dwellings should be to Lifetime Homes standards in accordance with Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan. In this case, it equates to 1-3 units.
38. Although the Lifetime Homes standards has been replaced by the new National Technical Housing standards, the need to design and build accessible and adaptable accommodation remains integral to future neighbourhood planning.
39. The proposed passenger lift, foyer and hallway circulations are acceptable and 2 accessible car spaces are shown in the revised car park plan which accords with the minimum parking standards. This allows for a level of access within the development.
40. The proposed ground floor plan shows 2 accessible units (units 2 & 3) which is 14% of the development and within the scope of policy CP2. The two disabled car spaces represent 20% of the total parking spaces, which corresponds with the proportion of accessible units and when accounting for some of the units will be car free. They would be located next to the proposed bin store areas at a distance of between 10-14m from the main vehicular entrance which is acceptable from a Highways perspective.
41. A comment has been raised regarding the location of the disabled parking bays and consider that these may be best suited next to the lift, closer to the building for the benefit of particularly wheelchair users. Whilst Officers did raise this consideration with the applicant under this application, given the proposal is deemed acceptable from a highways perspective, the disabled spaces are proposed to remain in their location. It is still considered that these spaces are in a location in which they can be suitably used by those that need them. Furthermore, application number 222367 was not refused on this basis at Planning committee.
42. On the basis of the above, there is no indication or evidence that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences,

issues, and priorities in relation to this planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts because of the development.

Amenity Space for Future Occupiers:

Internal Amenity:

43. Policy TB07 of the MDD Local Plan and R17 of the Borough Design Guide SPD require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity. In accordance with the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard, a minimum standard of 39-79sqm applies depending upon the number of bedrooms and the occupancy. Additionally, double bedrooms should have a minimum area of 11.5sqm with width of 2.55m-2.75m, single bedrooms should have an area of 7.5sqm and a width of 2.15m, living spaces should have a minimum area of 23-27sqm and there should be provision for internal storage.
44. With the proposal, minimum unit sizes are satisfied in all cases. Bedroom widths and sizes are also compliant and the number of units with deficient combined living space sizes are minimal and where there are shortfalls, the extent is minor (i.e. 20-24sqm instead of 23-27sqm). It is also noted that some of those units with deficient combined living space are those benefiting from external balconies which improves the quality of accommodation. Therefore, in terms of internal unit sizes allowing a functional internal environment, no objection is raised.
45. R18 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires sufficient sunlight and daylight to new properties, with dwellings afforded a reasonable dual outlook and southern aspect. Section 12 of the NPPF seeks to promote development that has good architecture and layout with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and Section 14 states that new development should take account of layout, orientation, and massing to minimise energy consumption. In this regard, all units are dual aspect (albeit units 13 and 14 would have south and west facing windows, unlike the other dwellings which have north facing windows). All dwellings have south facing windows to maximise the amount of natural light received. With habitable rooms having access to window openings and some with external balconies, so that the level of natural light and ventilation to the units is considered acceptable.

External Amenity:

46. R16 of the Borough Design Guide SPD stipulates that each unit should have access to some form of amenity space and it should retain and protect privacy, benefit from sunlight where possible and be able to accommodate 2–4 chairs and a small table. 9 apartments would have access to a private balcony of varying size, all capable of accommodating a table and chairs.
47. It is acknowledged that 5 units would not benefit from private amenity space; however, there is generally less expectation to outdoor amenity space within town centre locations, and there are opportunities for recreation and outdoor space in close proximity to the site, with the Woodford Park and facilities circa 200m walk providing high-quality amenity space for the enjoyment of future occupiers. On this basis, it is considered that the scheme affords adequate amenity for occupiers.

Neighbouring Residential Amenities:

Overlooking:

48. R15 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires the retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms, with separation of 22m to the rear or 30m on the second floor and 10m to the street or 15m from the second floor. The note on page 47 of the design guide clarifies that schemes in more urban settings or with a more intimate character will often require a tighter, more compact layout.
49. The reason for the refusal of the previous scheme was due to the perceived inadequate separation distance of 11m between the proposed third floor and the Sandford Court (Flats above Lidl). In the Design Guide SPD, it states that generally a separation distance of 15m is required. It is important to note this is recommended guidance but as described above will often not be suitable or required in all circumstances when based on the context of the site.
50. The site is within a densely built-up area with a mixture of large flatted development adjoining it. This is reflective of the site's location directly adjoining a district parade of shops, the large Lidl supermarket and other commercial premises. There is already an existing degree of overlooking from the first-floor office windows, mostly concentrated along the front and rear elevations. The extent of overlooking will undoubtedly increase with its conversion to residential use and the installation of new windows within the proposed second and third floors and addition of balconies to both sides of the building. Nonetheless, this degree of overlooking is not harmful nor considered uncharacteristic for a high-density town centre location.
51. To the north (front) of the building, there is a mixed-use building comprising the Lidl supermarket at ground floor, the Woodley Centre Surgery at first floor and residential flats on the second floor. There would be no negative impact from proposed windows/balconies for the new flats on the first and second levels of the subject development, as these would face the non-residential surgery.
52. With regard to the existing residential flats above the surgery, proposed units 13 and 14 would now be recessed further back at a distance of 15m from these opposite flats. This has been achieved through a reduction of two units from that of the refused scheme, allowing alterations to the proposed layout. This, in combination with the removal of northern facing windows, would further prevent any harmful overlooking between these flats. Whilst the above is considered satisfactory, privacy screens have also been added to the balconies of units 13 and 14 to further prevent any opportunities of overlooking into the balconies of the flats opposite. Condition 23 will ensure that the privacy screens are installed before occupation of the dwellings. Not only does the scheme enjoy a more appropriate relationship with those existing flats opposite, but the scheme now complies with the recommended distance contained within the Borough Design Guide and it is thereby considered to overcome the previous reason for refusal.
53. To the east is the public car park of Headley Road, with the rear gardens of properties facing Ambleside Close at a distance of 46m from the subject building, so that no overlooking impact will occur upon these neighbouring amenities. To the west there are rear windows on first and second floors of properties 130-162 Crockhamwell Road but again these are at a separation of circa 26m from the side elevation of the main body of the subject building and 43m from the side elevation of the rear

extension, which would be well in excess of the Borough Design Guide recommendations.

54. To the south there is a single residential property (the Beechwood Primary School's caretaker dwelling) and beyond this the school premises. Concerns were previously raised by third parties over overlooking impact upon this dwelling and school. With regard to the dwelling, it is noted there is already a degree of overlooking from the existing first floor office windows on the rear elevation. Nonetheless, the nearest window on the southern side elevation of the proposed rear extension would be that of unit 1 serving a bathroom, which can be conditioned to remain obscure glazed. New windows on the second and third floor levels over the main building would be at a distance of approximately 29m from the side elevation of the dwelling, slightly under the minimum 30m minimum required by the Borough Design Guide, however still considered acceptable to maintain adequate levels of privacy upon this neighbouring dwelling.
55. With regard to the school premises, it is noted that rear habitable room windows of the proposed development would be circa 59m away from the school facilities, so that no detrimental impact is expected to occur.
56. Where non habitable spaces can be ameliorated, condition 22 requires obscure glazing.
57. In summary, officers consider that this scheme has now adequately overcomes the reason for refusal for previous application 222367 which was centred around overlooking into residential windows of Sandford Court. This has been achieved by a redesign facilitated by the reduction of two units, introduction of privacy screens, and adherence to the recommended 15m separation distance outlined in the Borough Design Guide.

Loss of light

58. Policy R18 of the Borough Design Guide SPD aims to protect sunlight and daylight to existing properties, with no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties. The proposal retains a minimum 12m separation distance from the side elevation of the single residential caretaker's dwelling, and due to its southern location, this neighbouring property would have no detrimental loss of light impact from the proposed development.
59. With regard to the residential flats above the Lidl building, the applicant has submitted a section plan to illustrate that the 25 degree line of sight upon the front windows of these flats would not be infringed by the proposal. The proposal therefore complies with the Borough Design Guide in terms of separation distances and the requirements of Policy R18. In addition, the proposed development would provide all proposed flats with sufficient daylight/sunlight. The proposal is therefore acceptable in this regard as it complies with BRE guidance in terms of daylight and sunlight impacts.

Overbearing

60. Policy R16 of the Borough Design Guide SPD recommends separation distances of 1m to the side boundary, 10-15m front to front and 12-15m back to flank. The proposal would maintain acceptable separation distances from neighbouring properties to the sides. To the front, a minimum 11m front-to-front separation distance is achieved and it is noted the proposed second and third floor levels over the existing building are set back from the main building line to alleviate any sense of enclosure, and given the overall proposed building height is comparable with the height of the Lidl building, there are no concerns with overbearing impact upon the residential flats above the Lidl building.
61. Likewise, the proposal sees a minimum 12m separation distance from the side elevation of the single residential caretaker's dwelling, so that no overbearing impact is expected to occur upon this neighbouring amenities.

Noise disturbance (to surrounding residents):

62. Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan require that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact. The existing retail units at ground floor are to remain unchanged as part of the proposal. The density of the residential element of the development and the location and size of the balconies is appropriate for the town centre location specially against the background noise level of the town centre. As such, there are no adverse noise concerns for existing residents within the surrounding properties.

Wind

63. The "wind tunnel" effect refer to by third parties is commonly associated to tall buildings in a city (over 20 storeys) that are in close proximity to one another. This creates a low pressure region, causing winds at ground level to move faster. In the case of this application, the existing relationship and separation distance between the subject building and the Lidl building opposite remains unchanged. Moreover, the Lidl building is 3 storey and the proposed development will result in a 4 storey building, which are not considered tall enough buildings to create a wind tunnel effect nor an adverse impact over and above the existing situation.

Highways Access and Parking Provision

Car parking:

64. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street car parking standards, including provision for charging facilities. The existing carpark area at the rear comprises circa 18 car spaces and is used on an informal basis. The existing uses (retail and office) generate a requirement for 45 spaces. With 18 spaces, this is a departure of at least 27 spaces at present.
65. The subject application proposes to redevelop the existing car park area, with a total of 10 car spaces, additional pedestrian access, cycle parking, 2 disabled car spaces and 6 electric vehicle charging points. The unit mix of 5 x 2-bed and 9 x 1-bed flats represents a parking generation rate of 19 spaces between allocated/unallocated. When assuming an unchanged retail allocation of 5 spaces, the provision of 10 spaces represents a departure of up to 14 spaces.

66. The 2 accessible units (1-bed) would have an allocated parking space, and 3 of the proposed 2-bed flats, whereas the remainder 9 units (2 x 1 bed and 7 x 2 bed) would be car free. The remaining 5 no car spaces would be allocated for the existing ground floor retail units. Whilst there is a departure with the required standards and up to nine of the units will be car free, this is not an unreasonable outcome, particularly noting this is a town centre location where there is a high level of sustainability and less car dependence, with easy access to town centre facilities and public transport.
67. It is also noted that the 13 apartments on the top floor of the Lidl building were permitted as 'car free' under reference F/2009/0097, so as nine units at 43-47 Peach Street in Wokingham town (ref. 214184), which demonstrates this is not an unreasonable outcome within town centre locations. There is also an expected reduction in parking demand because of the change of use of the building from offices to residential. In addition, the development would be well supplemented by other modes of parking including compliant provision of cycle parking and disabled parking, which is supported. Visitor parking can be adequately accommodated within surrounding public car parks. The WBC Highways Officer is supportive of the scheme based on the above assessment and has raised no objections to the proposal or parking provision.
68. A car parking management plan will be secured via condition 17 which will detail how spaces will be managed and monitored. Finally, it should be noted that previous application 222367 was not refused on highway or parking grounds.

Other parking:

69. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates a minimum of 17 cycle spaces for the new residential units, an increase in 1 space from the previous submission. P2 and P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD ensure that it is conveniently located, secure and undercover and provided where it is compatible in the street scene.
70. The redevelopment of the carpark would result in 17 cycle spaces for the residents which would be in line with the above requirement. The cycle storage would be at the rear of the site and conveniently located via the rear exit and with secured access gate. In addition, a further vertical rack is provided for visitors and 4 vertical racks are also shown for users of the retail units to be located on the rear wall of these units. This is considered acceptable and further details relating to design and security measures will be secured by condition 15.
71. All the residential and retail spaces will be provided with electric vehicle charging points, in accordance with Appendix E of the Highway Design Guide. However it is unclear if these are active or passive points. Further details of the EV strategy can be secured via condition 9.
72. Disabled parking is provided in the form of two car spaces next to the proposed bin stores, which correlates with the provision of 2 accessible residential units.
73. Day to day deliveries for the flats will be from the street which is accepted by the WBC Highways Officer. As for the retained ground floor retail units, service access for deliveries will remain as existing via the service yard and through the rear doors.

Access and manoeuvring:

74. Due to the limited space on site and the need to have a safe manoeuvring area, the parking spaces have been shown to be at 2.4m x 4.8m, which is below the 5m x 2.5m standards, however WBC Highways Officer is content to accept the proposed dimensions.
75. Access to the car park is via the existing service yard off Library Parade, which is unchanged. Refuse collection will be kerbside from the existing service yard and turning circles within the site will not be required. The new rear access width would be over 4m which would allow access for a fire engine through the gate. There is a requirement for a fire engine to get within 45m of any point of the building and this can be achieved with the proposal. New pedestrian access is also created and is welcomed by the Highways Officer.

Traffic generation:

76. A Transport Statement has been submitted in support of the application, detailing the accessibility of the site and plans for parking. The Library Parade site is sustainably located within Woodley Town/Retail centre, close to a range of facilities and to public transport links. The WBC Highways Officer is satisfied with the information provided and advises that traffic from this development would not have an adverse impact on the highway network. Moreover, with a reduction in the number of car parking spaces and its town centre location, it is expected to be a significant reduction in traffic generation from the proposed residential use compared to the existing office use.

Construction Management:

77. Because of the town centre location, limitations within the rear of the site and road network within residential areas, a construction method statement is a pre-commencement requirement at condition 7.

Flooding and Drainage:

78. The site and access thereto is in Flood Zone 1 and at low risk from surface water flooding according to the Environment Agency mapping. There will be no increase in impermeable areas since the proposed extensions to the existing building will be over existing hardstanding.
79. A Drainage Statement (Glanville Consultants, dated 14/09/2022) has been submitted in support of the application.
80. The outflow rate from the proposed drainage system will be restricted to 5.5l/s for the total impermeable area of the site for all return periods up to the 100-year design rainfall event with an additional 40% allowance for the future effects of climate change. As a result of the development, flood risk will reduce, not increase, both on-site and elsewhere. It also proposes maintenance of the SuDS features by a management company, in accordance with Table 3 of the drainage statement document.
81. The drainage scheme will be secured via condition 20.

Landscape and Trees:

82. Policy CC03 of the MDD seeks to protect existing trees and promote opportunities for new soft landscaping.
83. Given its location within the Woodley Town Centre and existing site conditions which currently consists of hardstanding or existing building structure, there is no existing landscaping nor trees within the site, so that there are no tree or landscape objections. Landscaping details and boundary treatment details for the external spaces will be required to be submitted through conditions 5 and 11 and in accordance with R14 of the Borough Design Guide SPD, which requires well-designed hard and soft landscaping that complements housing.

Ecology:

84. Policy TB23 of the MDD states that development should protect existing wildlife and biodiversity.
85. The site is not located in a bat roosting potential zone, or Great Crested Newt zone. No objections have been raised by Ecology officers and therefore the proposal would not be considered to adversely affect these protected species.

Environmental Health:

Contaminated Land:

86. The site may have potential contamination issues and the WBC Environmental Health Officer has recommended that condition 6 be added in order to secure a scheme of potential contamination mitigation prior to commencement of development.

Noise:

87. Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact. Due to its town centre location, there are potential noise sources including the commercial units on the ground floor, the Lidl supermarket opposite the building, as well as from movement in the nearby car parks. Whilst impacts are to be expected in a dense location such as this, the WBC Environmental Health Officer has indicated that a noise impact assessment is carried out as a pre-commencement condition 12, covering the current acoustic environment and how predicted external noise will affect noise sensitive receptors including future occupiers of the flats, and any noise mitigation measures necessary to protect noise sensitive receptors.
88. Whilst it is a matter ordinarily left to buildings regulations, the reuse of part of the existing fabric of the building poses the potential for noise transmission, particularly to and from the ground floor retail units. As such, the WBC Environmental Health Officer has indicated that condition 13 is required to secure details of noise insulation for the new dwellings, to ensure that internal noise levels do not exceed 35 dB LAeq during the daytime and 30 dB LAeq during the night. 80. The proposed layout would require a significant amount of mechanical ventilation to bathrooms, however a riser has been provided such that concern is not raised.

89. In order to ensure that the existing residential amenities of nearby occupiers are protected during demolition and construction, condition 21 relates to permitted hours of work during construction, and condition 7 requires the submission of a construction method statement.

Odour:

90. The site is in the vicinity of several food premises including a café on the ground floor of the building, and there is a potential for cooking odour to have a negative impact on amenity of future occupiers of the flats. Therefore, an odour assessment implementing best practice for protecting future occupants will be required as part of condition 14.

Lighting:

91. The layout of the site means that any external lighting would be largely contained within the rear car park area. Condition 8 is however recommended to ensure that any proposed external lighting does not harmfully impact the amenity of surrounding residents.

Waste Storage:

92. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan requires adequate internal and external storage for the segregation of waste and recycling as well as provision for green waste and composting and an appropriate area for ease of collection. The drawings show bin storage to be located within the existing rear car parking area. The 3 x 1100L bin store is for the retail units. It has a combined floor area of 30sqm also containing 6 x 360L bins and 11 x 240 L bins, which is considered sufficient for the waste generation of 14 units as well as the retail units. It has direct access from the existing service yard allowing for ease of storage for residents/occupiers of the retail units and for collection. On this basis, no objection is raised.

Building Sustainability:

93. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD require sustainable design and conservation and R21 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that new development contribute to environmental sustainability and the mitigation of climate change. Policy CC05 of the MDD Local Plan encourages renewable energy and decentralised energy networks, with encouragement of decentralised energy systems and a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions for developments of 10+ dwellings or in excess of 1000m². This would be secured via condition 10. The applicant's energy consultants have advised that the development could achieve CO₂ savings of approx. 65% over the Building Regulations, Part L (2021) baseline and which would exceed the Council's policy requirement.
94. It should also be noted that the scheme promotes sustainable development through the provision of electric vehicle charging points and bicycle storage, and is in a highly sustainable location, where walking and use of public transport are good alternatives to the private car.

Employment Skills Plan:

95. Policy TB12 of the MDD Local Plan requires an employment skills plan (ESP) for this development. ESP uses the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) benchmark based on the value of construction. This is calculated by multiplying the total floor space by £1,025, which is the cost of construction per square metre as set out by Building Cost Information Service of RICS and the methodology as set out in the Council's Employment and Skills Guidance. In this case, it totals £1,380,675. The ESP would require a total of three community skills support jobs and the creation of one job. If for any reason the applicant is unable to deliver the plan or elects to pay the contribution, the employment outcomes of the plan will be borne by the Council at a contribution of £3,750. The requirements of the ESP will form part of the S106 legal agreement.

Community Infrastructure Levy:

96. The application is liable for CIL payments because it involves 14 new residential units on site. It is payable at £500.29/m² index linked.

CONCLUSION:

97. The principle of development is acceptable because the application site is within a major development location where the proposal for new residential dwellings is supported by policy, despite the relevant local plan policies being afforded limited weight. Whilst there is a loss of office floor space in the town centre, this continues to be outweighed by the provision of residential dwellings.
98. The location of the development is considered to be highly sustainable and would allow easy and safe access to facilities and services. The design, mass and scale of the building and the layout of the development is considered appropriate for the proposed use and its location within the Woodley Town Centre. The proposal involves a satisfactory outcome on traffic and parking grounds because of its town centre location. These matters were also deemed acceptable under previous application ref. 222367.
99. In the context of a town centre location, there is also adequate resident and neighbour amenity, and is considered to overcome the reason for refusal of the previous application (ref. 222367), relating to overlooking, by providing a policy compliant separation distance of 15m between the proposed development and dwellings at Sandford Court and additional privacy screening on balconies.
100. The Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Paragraph 11 of the Framework states that where the development plan is out of date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, or there are specific policies in the Framework which indicate that development should be restricted. In this regard the tilted balance is engaged.
101. Overall, it is not considered any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh those identified benefits of the scheme when assessed against the policies in the Framework when taken as a whole.
102. Paragraph 120 (c) of the NPPF (2021) also gives substantial weight to the development of suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes, which is the

case with this application. The NPPF also focuses on development being socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

Economically the proposed development would encourage development and associated economic growth through the construction works. The inhabitants of the 14 dwellings would also contribute to the local economy.

Regarding the **social role** the development would perform, the provision of 14 dwellings towards the Council's housing land supply position. A financial contribution towards Affordable Housing is also provided.

Regarding the **environmental role**, the proposal would see residential development in a highly sustainable location which has access to various modes of transport. The development would provide enhanced sustainability measures compared to the site as existing, namely through cycle storage, electric vehicle charging points and a minimum of 10% reduction in carbon emissions will be achieved.

103. Officers are therefore recommending the application for approval, subject to the conditions listed and a S106 legal agreement to secure a financial contribution towards affordable housing and the employment skills plan.

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

APPROVAL subject to the following:

Prior completion of a legal agreement pursuant to section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure:

- Provision of financial contribution towards affordable housing
- Employment Skills Plan

Conditions and Informatives:

1. **Timescale** – The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
2. **Approved details** – This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings:

PL08 Rev E – Proposed Third Floor Plan
PL10 Rev F – Proposed Library Parade and East Elevations
PL11 Rev E - Proposed South and West Elevations
PL12 Rev D – Proposed Section

Received 10th May 2023

PL01 – Location Plan
PL02 Rev B – Block Plan – Proposed Scheme
PL09 Rev B – Proposed Roof Plan
PL05 Rev C – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
PL06 Rev B – Proposed First Floor Plan
PL07 Rev C – Proposed Second Floor Plan

Received 27th March 2023

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, details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building 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. **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.

5. **Landscaping** – Prior to the commencement of the development, details of hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure, signs, lighting and external services, etc. Soft landscaping details shall include a 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. It shall include planting within the car park. 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.

6. **Contamination** – No development shall take place until a scheme to identify and deal with contamination of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include an investigation and assessment to identify the extent of contamination and the measures to be taken to avoid risk when the site is developed. Development shall not commence until the measures approved in the scheme have been implemented.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination of the site is identified at the outset to allow remediation to protect existing/proposed occupants of property on the site and/or adjacent land. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) and Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3.

7. **Construction Management** – No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement and Management Plan 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
- viii. no deliveries outside the permitted working hours
- ix. Best practice for use of machinery on site e.g. no idling of engines when equipment not in use etc
- x. lorry routing

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

8. **Lighting** – Prior to commencement of development, details of floodlighting and other externally mounted lighting of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The floodlighting shall be installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved details unless the local planning authority gives its written consent to the variation.

Reason: To protect neighbouring residential amenities.

9. **Electric Vehicle Charging** – Prior to the commencement of the development, an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy serving the development shall be submitted for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This strategy should include details relating to on-site infrastructure, installation of charging points and future proofing of the site. The approved details are to be implemented prior to the first occupation of the flats and maintained for the life of the development, unless otherwise agreed with the local planning authority.

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.

10. **Energy Statement** – Prior to the commencement of development, an Energy Statement indicating that an absolute minimum of the 10% of the predicted energy requirement of the development will be obtained 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 Statement shall also investigate the viability of providing electric vehicle charging points at construction. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the flats are first occupied and shall remain operational for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14, Core Strategy policy CP1, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC05 & the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

11. **Details of boundary walls and fences** – No development shall commence until details of all boundary treatment(s) shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development or phased as agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.

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

12. **Noise** – No development shall take place until a full Noise Impact Assessment to BS 4142 2014 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The assessment shall cover the current acoustic environment and how predicted noise from the development, including all proposed plant and machinery and vehicle delivery options will affect nearby noise sensitive receptors, including the occupiers of the proposed development and any mitigation measures necessary. Development shall not commence until the measures approved in the report have been implemented.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenities. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

13. **Noise Insulation** - The residential flats shall be designed and/or insulated so as to provide attenuation against externally generated noise in accordance with a mitigation scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before commencement of development. The scheme shall ensure that all noise implications are mitigated so that internal ambient noise levels for dwellings shall not exceed 35 dB LAeq (16 hour) 07:00-23:00 during the daytime and 30 dB LAeq (8 hour) 23:00-07:00 during the night assuming full road traffic flows at the outset. The design and/or insulation measures identified in the scheme shall ensure that ambient internal noise levels and the noise levels within external spaces for the dwellings meet the BS8233/1999.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenities. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

14. **Odour** – No development shall take place until a scheme implementing best practice for protecting future occupiers of the residential flats from commercial odour, including all plant and machinery in connection with any commercial kitchen/extraction/ventilation/flues, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The mitigation measures shall be retained and maintained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenities.

15. **Cycle parking** – Prior to the commencement of the development, full and final details of secure and covered bicycle storage facilities for the occupants and visitors shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage and parking shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details 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 and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

16. **Parking and turning** – No unit shall be occupied 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.

17. Parking Management Plan – Prior to the first occupation of the flats, 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 adequate on-site parking provision in the interests of highway and pedestrian safety, convenience and amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

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

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

19. Bin store – No residential unit shall be occupied until the bin storage areas for the building have been provided in full accordance with the approved details. The bin storage shall be permanently so retained and used for no purpose other than the temporary storage of refuse and recyclable materials. *Reason: Reason: In the interests of visual and neighbouring amenities and functional development. Relevant policy: Core Strategy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.*

20. Drainage – The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details identified in the Drainage Statement (Glanville Consultants, dated 14/09/2022) received by the local planning authority on 28/03/2023.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory drainage of the site and to prevent increased risk of flooding. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Technical Guidance on the NPPF (Flood Risk), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC09.

21. Hours of work and deliveries – No work relating to the development hereby approved, including preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am and 1pm Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

No deliveries relating to the development hereby permitted shall be taken in or dispatched from the site other than between the hours of 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am and 1pm 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.

22. **Obscure glazing** – The bathroom window of unit 1 on the south elevation shall be fitted with obscured glass and shall be permanently so-retained. The window 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.

23. **Installation of privacy screens to balconies** – Prior to occupation of units 13 and 14, the privacy screens on the external balconies, as shown on the approved plans, will be installed maintained for the lifetime of the development.

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

Informatives:

1. This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, the obligations in which relate to this development.
2. 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.
3. The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
4. Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel.: 0118 9746000.
5. Any works/ events carried out by or on behalf of the developer affecting either a public highway or a prospectively maintainable highway (as defined under s.87 New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA)), shall be co-ordinated and licensed as required under NRSWA and the Traffic Management Act 2004 in order to minimise disruption to both pedestrian and vehicular users of the highway. Any such works or events, and particularly those involving the connection of any utility to the site must be coordinated by the developer in liaison with the Borough's Street Works team (0118 974 6302). This must take place at least three months in advance of the intended works to ensure effective co-ordination with other works so as to minimise disruption.

6. Whilst it would appear from the application that the proposed development is to be entirely within the curtilage of the application site, the granting of planning permission does not authorise you to gain access or carry out any works on, over or under your neighbour's land or property without first obtaining their consent, and does not obviate the need for compliance with the requirements of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.
7. The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. A revised Liability Notice will be issued if this amount changes. Anyone can formally assume liability to pay, but if no one does so then liability will rest with the landowner. There are certain legal requirements that must be complied with. For instance, whoever will pay the levy must submit an Assumption of Liability form and a Commencement Notice to Wokingham Borough Council prior to commencement of development, failure to do this will result in penalty surcharges being added. For more information see the Council's website - Community Infrastructure Levy advice page. Please submit all CIL forms and enquiries to developer.contributions@wokingham.gov.uk.
8. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

APPENDIX 2 - Parish Council Comments

PLANNING REF : 230743
PROPERTY ADDRESS : The Oakwood Centre
: Headley Road, Woodley, Wokingham
: RG5 4JZ
SUBMITTED BY : Woodley Town Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 26/04/2023

COMMENTS:

Members of the Planning & Community Committee have considered this amended application and, once again, have objections to the proposals. Their objections were as follows:

- The current design would lead to overlooking onto Beechwood Primary School;
- The proposal removes existing parking provision for occupants of the retail units; Members recommend that allocated parking be introduced for retail unit staff
- Concern was raised about the design creating an unwelcome 'wind tunnel' effect between the development and neighbouring buildings

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