

Agenda Item 69.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
232475	EXT	Earley Town Council	Maiden Erlegh;

Applicant	Mace Group, on behalf of the Government Property Agency
Site Address	Tob1, Earley Gate, University of Reading, Reading. RG6 6EQ
Proposal	Full planning application for the erection of the headquarters building of European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECWMF) with access parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing buildings.
Type	Full
Officer	Christopher Howard
Reason for determination by committee	Major application

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on 14 th February 2024
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Planning
RECOMMENDATION	APPROVAL subject to conditions and informatives

SUMMARY

The site is located at land within the University of Reading Whiteknights Campus and more specifically to the south east part of the campus. The site is situated around 3km from Reading Town Centre and is set within an urban area with a mixture of land uses. Whiteknights Campus serves primarily as an education facility with supporting student accommodation. Whilst the area generally has an urban feel by virtue of the buildings and supporting infrastructure, the campus is emphasised by swathes of open green infrastructure due to the soft landscaping. This softens the impact of the built form and the lending itself towards a parkland type of feel especially towards Whiteknights Lake. The landscaping makes an important contribution to the urban parks within Reading. This contributes towards the designation of the campus in the Core Strategy as a Site of Urban Landscape Value.

In terms of the background of the activities of the proposed site operator, the application is for an office building that would facilitate the re-location of the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecast (ECWMF) to the University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus. The ECWMF are an independent intergovernmental organisation which is supported by 34 nation states. The service acts as a research institute together with 24/7 operational service that operates weather predictions to Member and Co-operating states and wider community. The ECWMF have one of the largest supercomputer facilities and meteorological data archives in the world which assists weather prediction, this is located in mainland Europe. In addition, they assist in the European Union's Space programme and provide significant data for climate change. The ECWMF current headquarters are located at Shinfield Park which has been the principal home to their operations since they were established, broadly in 1975.

The site in Shinfield Park is now however no longer suitable to meet the needs of the longer-term operation of the ECWMF and it is not feasible to upgrade the site due to the constraints of the existing buildings. The organisation undertook a review of possible future

sites internationally and choose the Wokingham as the preferred site given the existing facility is located here, the links with the Met Office and the University of Reading meteorological department. The proposed relocation of the building to Whiteknights Campus provides an opportunity to secure and retain an anchor for long term employment in the borough. In addition, the relocation to the University campus will allow for a greater degree of clustering of facilities and knowledge sharing since the proposed new headquarters will be located adjacent to the University of Reading's Meteorological Building. There are aspirations to create a meteorological / climate science hub at the campus with a focus on research and development and knowledge sharing. The outcomes of this could be significant in respect to knowledge and understanding of climate change and developing models for ever more accurate weather forecasting.

The relocation of the facility to Whiteknights Campus would retain an important employment hub for the borough. The facility will support highly skilled workforce, 300 direct jobs and 455 indirect jobs. This generates a combined Gross Value Added Figure of £16.7m directly and £24.6m indirectly so has a significant contribution to the local and wider economy.

The facility also attracts around 1,900 visitors per annum which generates demand for the local tourism industry through hotel accommodation, recreational services and retail. The relocation of the facility would continue to help support this sector of the local economy. There are therefore significant economic, social and sustainability objectives that would be delivered by the development.

In respect to specific location of the proposed building and current land use, it would occupy an area of land that is currently occupied by single storey office buildings (referred to as TOB1). The buildings are currently occupied by the University of Reading Art School which will be relocated within the campus which has approval under 222039. The existing buildings are not particularly sustainable since they date from the Second World War and have a prefabricated appearance which sprawls across the plot which does not make best use of the land within this urban context. Adjacent to the site, to the south, is the Citadel which is the Grade II listed Reading War Room. In addition, there are further Grade II listed buildings to the north east of the site which are North and South Lodge which are residential dwellings which have maintained the appearance of gatehouses.

In design terms, the building would be four stories in height which chimes with some of the existing built form on Whiteknights Campus. The layout has been informed by the existing built form such as the Reading Enterprise Centre building to the north east. The building has a strong emphasis on a high-quality external appearance which is emphasised by the landscaping approach and a perspective view is shown in Figure 1 below. Overall, for the reasons set out below, the building and grounds are of high-quality design, and it would not have an adverse impact on the Citadel, North and South Lodge, or the area of Urban Landscape Value.



Figure 1: A birds eye view of the proposed development

The development would not have a significant detrimental impact on the character of the area or the landscape setting. The location of the site together with the level of use and activities within the facility would not cause significant harm to existing residents. In addition, the proposal would secure biodiversity enhancements and shall achieve above minimum policy requirements for sustainability. Whilst it is noted Reading Borough have objected it is considered that the scheme our Highway Officers raise no objections in terms in terms of traffic, highway safety and parking for reasons set out in the highways section - paragraphs 36-57 below.

The application is before the Planning Committee as it is a major development that is recommended for approval. In policy terms, there is no policy conflict identified. The recommendation is that the application is approved subject to conditions and subject to completion of the s106 agreement as set out in Appendix 1.

PLANNING STATUS

- Core Employment Location
- Whiteknights Campus
- Site of Urban Landscape Value
- Footpath 6 to the front of the site
- Local Wildlife Site / Consultation Zone (The Wilderness) to the south/east
- Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD
- Mineral consultation zone
- Area of archaeological potential
- Part of site within risk of Surface Water Flooding

- Grade II Listed building located to the south of the site - The Citadel
- Grade II Listed buildings located to the north east - North and South Lodge

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the three-tiered recommendation as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The recent planning applications that relate directly to the site are summarised below:

230483	Prior approval submission for demolition of the main TOB1 building (and TOB1 portal shed and outbuilding), Marsden Shed, glass houses and timber yard shed.	Approve
223588	Screening Opinion application for an Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed erection of 1 no. building for research and development relating to the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) with associated parking, access and landscaping, following demolition of existing temporary office buildings.	EIA not required

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

For Commercial	
Site Area	1.7ha
Previous land use(s)	Mixed, previously developed land and open space for Whiteknights Campus.
Existing floorspace	6025
Proposed floorspace of each use	10615
Change in floorspace (+/-)	4590
Number of jobs created/lost	300 (+3 jobs from the existing facility at Shinfield) and 455 indirect jobs. In effect, these would be retained in the UK though securing the relocation of the site.
Proposed parking spaces	216 including 11 blue badge spaces and 26 EV spaces
Proposed cycle spaces	80 + 10 visitor
Proposed motorcycle spaces	8

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue	Comments which are included as informative 10
Thames Water	No objection request condition 19
WBC Biodiversity	No objection subject to conditions 16, 17 and 22
WBC Economic Prosperity and Place (Community Infrastructure)	No objection requires Employment Skills Plan to be subject to S106
WBC Drainage	No objection subject to a condition
WBC Environmental Health	No objection subject to a condition
WBC Highways	No objection subject to conditions 6-12
WBC Tree & Landscape	No objection subject to conditions 13-15
WBC Conservation	No objection and requests condition 5 and 13
Berkshire Archaeology	No objection
Berkshire Gardens Trust	No objection requests a conservation management plan for the Wilderness – <i>Officer note: This is not a matter that can be addressed by this application as the development would not trigger this requirement on its own nor would it put the local wildlife site at greater risk for deterioration. It is understood that the University are willing to review this with the Biodiversity Officer. This approach is supported by the Biodiversity Officer.</i>
Reading Borough Council	Objection - summarised as impact of trip movements on queuing at junctions, highway safety and insufficient parking – see report below which incorporates their suggested reasons for refusal in full.
Office for Nuclear Regulation	No objection

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council: No objection, comments on:

- Suitability of access via the Ealey Gate junction – *Officer note: this has been assessed in the transport assessment and it is considered that it would not have a severe impact on the highway network. The level of traffic movements would not be significant when taken over the course of a working day and is acceptable in the AM and PM peaks.*
- Should provide on-street parking restrictions - *Officer note: a suitable area of parking has been incorporated into the design modelled on transport habits associated with the existing facility and it is not often that a site comes forward with such comparable data. It is not envisaged that the operation of the building would put pressure for existing parking for the surrounding residential roads. Parking for the site can be monitored through the Travel Plan.*

- *Should a need be identified for more restrictions on local roads (the development itself is not likely on its own to trigger a need for this given the parking), any parking restrictions would need to be undertaken by the Highway Authority in accordance with consultation with residents.*
- *Would like to see sustainable travel promoted – Officer note: there is significant secure cycle parking incorporated into the design and the site has excellent links for public transport. This is acceptable.*

Local Members: No comments received.

Neighbours: In total 425 letters were sent to residents with 12 responses (when discounting duplicates on the website). From these, we received 2 letters of objection and 9 letters of comment. A further letter of support was also included in the response.

In terms of the letters of objection / comment, the following planning considerations have been raised:

- *Impact on highways, traffic and highway safety – Officer note: the application is accompanied by a transport assessment which has been assessed by the Highway Officer. No objections have been raised with the findings of this and transport related matters are further discussed in paragraphs 36-57 below.*
- *Existing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure not suitable, need for controlled crossing points - Officer note: the links are considered acceptable by the Highway Officer. The application must be seen in the context of the level of infrastructure that could be requested in accordance with the tests in regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.*
- *Insufficient parking for the facility and loss of existing parking not compensated for. Impact on parking for residential streets within the area – Officer note: the parking provision for the new building has been undertaken using surveys of the existing site at Shinfield Park as a comparable. Whilst there would be a loss of some existing surface parking, the use of these spaces was to support the activities that were within the TOB1 buildings which have now ceased. Parking that occurs in these areas appears to be for convenience for access to the faculties at the south of the site (Agriculture, Policy and Development for example). There are alternative further parking facilities within Whiteknights Campus and parking permits are controlled as is the management of vehicles using the parking areas.*

The parking for the new building is in accordance with the existing use patterns and an assessment has been made by the Highways Officer who is satisfied that the proposed development would maintain sufficient parking on site.

Any parking restrictions on residential roads outside of the application site would need to be agreed with the Highway Department and there would be a need to demonstrate the requirement for these.

- *Impact of construction traffic – Officer note: this will be controlled by the Construction Environmental Management Plan (condition 12).*

- Insufficient EV charging points – *Officer note: the application has been assessed by the Highway officer and it meets our standards for EV charging. Building regulations will cover this but the application includes provision of active and passive EV charging (condition 11).*
- Access to public transport – *Officer note: as discussed in the report, there is good access to public transport facilities in close proximity of the site with a variety of routes making this an attractive option. Please see paragraphs 38-43 below.*
- Request for pedestrian crossing on Wilderness Road - *Officer note: this is not directly triggered by the development. Developments cannot be required to fix existing problems.*
- Impact on existing landscape features – *Officer note: the application has been assessed by the Landscape and Biodiversity Officers who raise no objections subject to conditions 13-17.*
- Is there scope for greater management of the Wilderness - *Officer note: This is not a matter that can be addressed by this application as the development would not trigger this requirement on its own nor would it put the local wildlife site at greater risk for deterioration. It is understood that the University are willing to review this with the Biodiversity Officer. This approach is supported by the Officer.*

In terms of the letters of support the following planning considerations have been raised:

- Supports the design of the building in the context of those that would be replaced however how will contractors be managed – *Officer note: the application will be subject to a Construction Environmental Management Plan (condition 12) which will identify areas for contractor parking. This should limit parking on adjacent roads by contractors although as this is public highway, this cannot be entirely eliminated. The Construction Environmental Management Plan should however provide a more attractive and close proximity alternative.*

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework
National Design Guide
National Planning Practice Guidance

Core Strategy (CS)

CP1 – Sustainable Development
 CP2 – Inclusive Communities
 CP3 – General Principles for Development
 CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements
 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand
 CP7 – Biodiversity
 CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
 CP10 - Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network.

CP15 – Employment Development

MDD Local Plan (MDD)

CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC02 – Development Limits

CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping

CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction

CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks

CC06 – Noise

CC07 – Parking

CC08 – Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure

CC09 – Development and Flood Risk

CC10 – Sustainable Drainage

TB12 – Employment Skills Plan

TB14 – Whiteknights Campus

TB21 – Landscape Character

TB22 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value

TB23 – Biodiversity and Development

TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets

TB25 – Archaeology

Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan 2022

M2 - Safeguarding sand and gravel resources

Other

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement

PLANNING ISSUES

Site description / established principles

1. As advised in the summary of the report, the site is located at land within the University of Reading Whiteknights Campus and more specifically to the south east part of the campus. The site is located around 3km of Reading Town Centre and is located within an urban area with a mixture of land uses. Whiteknights Campus serves primarily education facilities and supporting student accommodation. Whilst the area generally has an urban feel by virtue of the buildings and supporting infrastructure, the campus is emphasised by swathes of open green infrastructure due to the soft landscaping. This softens the impact of the built form and the lending itself towards a parkland type of feel especially towards Whiteknights Lake. The landscaping makes an important contribution to the urban parks within Reading. This contributes towards the designation of the campus in the Core Strategy as a Site of Urban Landscape Value.

2. The site is bound to the north east and south east by Whiteknights Road and Wilderness Road which serve as the principal routes to the site for motor vehicles via Earley Gate. It is also well linked to the wider campus by pedestrian and cycle links. In addition, on the southern and eastern boundary is an area of woodland called The

Wilderness (a Local Wildlife Site) which provides a green buffer from the proposed site location and residential development along Whiteknights Road and Wilderness Road.

3. Broadly to the north and west of the site there are further buildings three and four storey buildings that include the Reading Enterprise Centre and associated infrastructure that support the function of the University campus. Open parkland and Whiteknights Lake is located beyond this. A satellite image of the site which shows the open green space and relationships with some of the surroundings is shown in Figure 2 below.

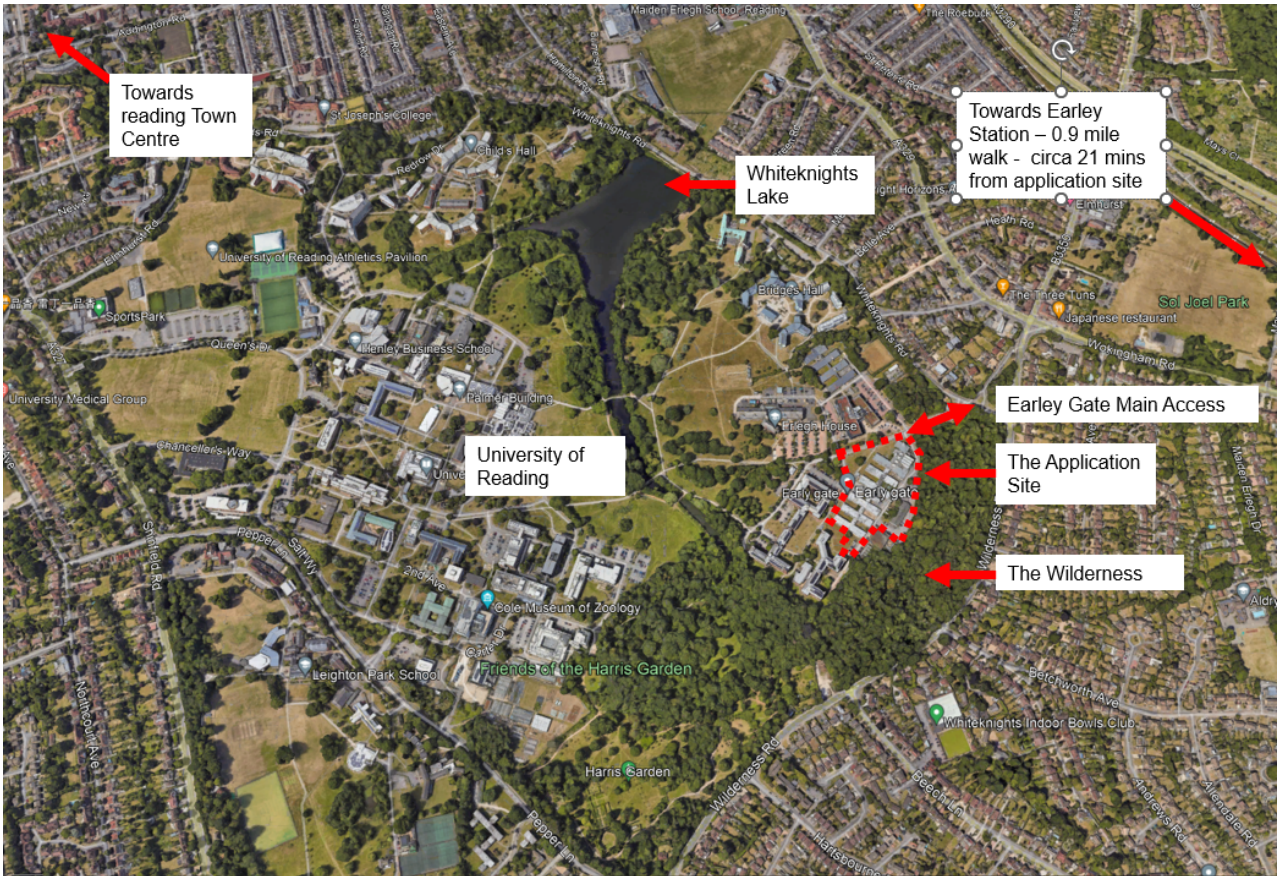


Figure 2: Satellite photo of the site showing Whiteknights Campus and context with the surrounding area

4. The site itself is broadly 1.77ha in size, located on predominantly previously developed land and a cluster of mostly single storey buildings serve the Reading University School of Art. The existing buildings are proposed to be demolished to make way for the proposed development. These buildings are classified as non-designated heritage assets. To the south, beyond the site boundary is the Reading War Room ('The Citadel') a designated Grade II heritage asset as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Grade II Listed Reading War Rooms or the Citadel

5. The current land can be classified as previously developed and technically brownfield. The existing buildings are referred to TOB1 (Temporary Office Building 1) as shown in Figure 4. These are prefabricated buildings, were erected during the Second World War and have outlasted their envisaged life span. Whilst these are well maintained, they are not well fitted out or insulated for modern standards and are not upgradable. The proposed building would replace these and make more efficient use of the land and it would be more sustainable.



Figure 4: Temporary Office Building 1 to be demolished (TOB1)

Description of development

6. As advised in the summary section above, the building would serve as the headquarters of the ECWMF which will support the activities of the 34 member states to support world leading global weather prediction. The existing TOB1 buildings would be demolished to make way for the new headquarters together with supporting infrastructure.

7. Strong consideration has been made in respect to the building and the surrounding landscape through a zoned approach to the landscaping dividing these into four character areas to take into account the constraints of the site as set out further below.

8. There is a strong emphasis on the quality of the design and sustainability of the building. The majority would be clad with limestone / re-constituted cladding above a ground floor rendered section. A central glazed section provides a sense of arrival space to the building and a link from the main entrance to the gardens facing towards the Wilderness.

9. The building itself would be four stories and would have a maximum height of 21.7m for the central glazed section. The majority of the roof form would be 18.13m. The layout of the building takes on a broadly 'W' form of footprint which is similar to the layout of the Reading Enterprise Centre opposite. The layout of the building also embraces the outlook of the site to the Wilderness area of woodland on the eastern boundary. A site plan is provided in Figure 5 below.

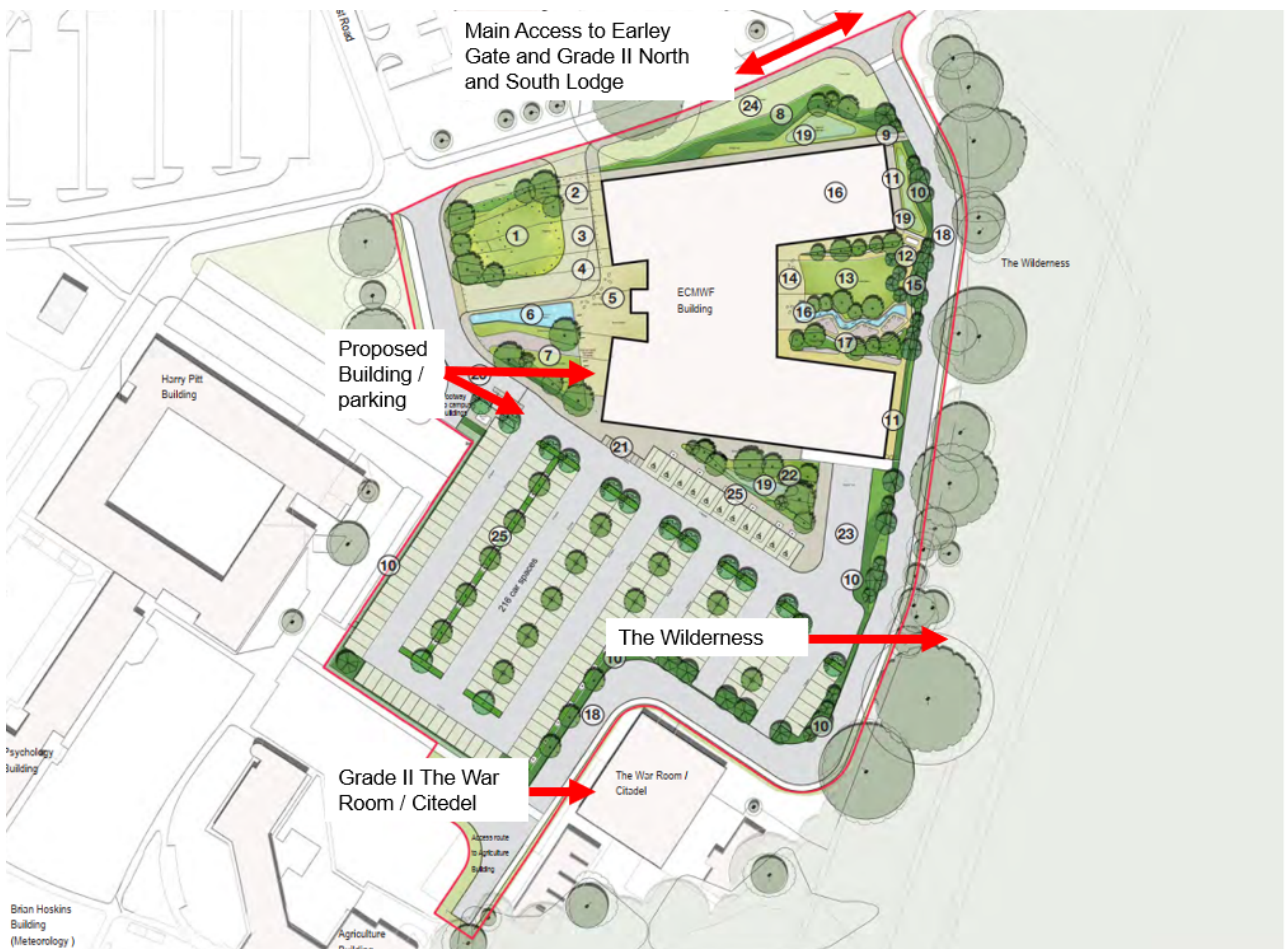


Figure 5: Proposed site Layout

10. The application consists of around 10,615m² of floor space. This will be divided between office use, circulation space and supporting infrastructure such as meeting rooms plant etc.

Principle of development

11. Policy TB14: Whiteknights Campus of the MDD DPD recognises that there will be a need for the expansion of the facilities on the campus over the plan period. The uses identified are in respect to research and enterprise accommodation. This outlines that the development needs to pay regard to the criteria set out in clause 2 of the policy. Development on the campus should regard the local character, local wildlife sites such as the Wilderness, neighbouring properties and the historic landscape of the area.

12. The site is also set within a designated Site of Urban Landscape Value. This sets out that development in the area should retain and enhance landscape features for the townscape, character and urban form of the area and minimise the visual impact of development. Development should also protect, manage and enhance the sites capacity for informal recreation.

13. In addition, policies CP1 and CP3 set out the general principles for development including design. Development should be of high quality and pay regard for the character of the area. The design principles are underpinned by the design advice set out in the Borough Design Guide.

14. The application should also be read in conjunction with national planning policy. Section 2 of the NPPF outlines three interdependent objectives regarding sustainable development and promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The objectives set out in paragraph 8 are:

a) *an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

b) *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*

c) *an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy*

These principles are broadly echoed by policy CP1 of the Core Strategy.

15. The NPPG Housing and economic needs assessment also places a high emphasis on policy support for different forms of employment use. This recommends clustering certain industries which include digital and creative industries to support collaboration, innovation, productivity and sustainability. It also recommends that there may be the need for: *policy-making authorities will need to develop a clear understanding of such needs and how they might be addressed taking account of relevant evidence and policy within Local Industrial Strategies. For example, this might include the need for greater studio capacity, co-working spaces or research facilities.*

16. The University has its own department for meteorology and the proposed re-location of the EECMWF to Whiteknights will allow for a greater degree of collaboration between the institutions.

17. In addition to the above, the Council's vision is 'A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business' and is underpinned by the Vision for Wokingham Borough as set out in the Core strategy. This therefore places a high emphasis on delivering employment within the borough.

Principle of development conclusion

18. The proposed building is in principle acceptable in this location within the settlement area and serving as an employment use on an established campus which is supported by the planning policy, subject to the further considerations outlined below.

Masterplan, detailed design, landscaping and layout

19. Core Strategy Policies CP1, *Sustainable Development* and CP3, *General Principles for Development* requires high quality design that respects its context. This requirement is amplified by MDD LP Policies CC03, *Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping* and TB21, *Landscape Character together with policy TB22 Sites of Urban Landscape Value* which require development proposals to protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure. Existing tree should be retained where possible together with hedges and other landscape features. High quality ideally native planting should be integrated into the design of development as an integral part of any scheme as identified within the context of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment. Policy TB22 seeks to ensure that applications retain and enhance the landscape features and minimise the impact on the Sites of Urban Landscape Value.

20. In addition, the Borough Design Guide sets out overarching principles for development and sets out guidance in section 7 regarding non-residential development.

21. The applicant has undertaken a thorough and well considered site analysis including a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and a Design and Access Statement which have informed the design approach. This is also underpinned for a strong vision for the building. This has informed defined character areas for the plot which are well articulated and respond to the wider site constraints such as the Wilderness and the Citadel. Four areas have been identified as shown in Figure 6 and the detail behind these are described in the following paragraphs.

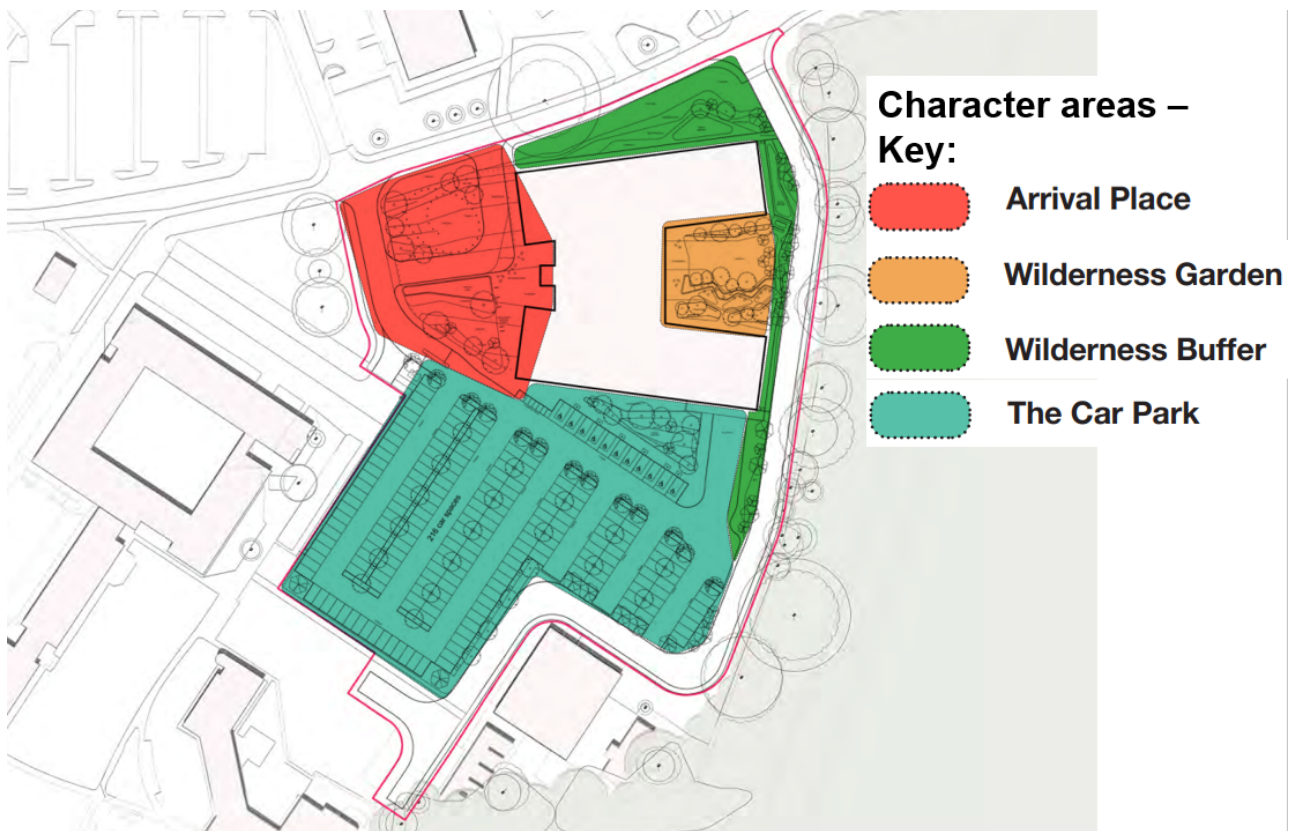


Figure 6: Application of character areas to inform the design.

- The Arrival Space is located to the front of the building. The design approach here has been well thought out leading to a positive sense of arrival space for future users of the site. The building has been articulated by a central glazed section which emphasises the entrance to the building, which rises above the two main accommodation wings that flank it. Landscaping is also articulated here with the flags of the member states on a front lawn area which incorporates tree planting. There is also a water feature included for the Arrival Space which pays regard to the future use of the building together with adding some blue infrastructure to the site frontage. This means that whilst there is functional pick up and drop off area within this space, due to the design considerations, this does not dominate the frontage of the building. The use of softer forms of materials for the paved areas such as block paving also helps as shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7: The Arrival Space showing the building frontage and use of materials, water feature and member state flags partly shown to the left of the image

- The Wilderness Garden is located to the rear of the building (please see Figure 8). This area is framed by the building which encloses it on three sides so it will have a courtyard type of feel and will overlook the Wilderness providing a soft backdrop. The area is designed for the end user in mind, and it will be a private space for the employees which will be tranquil given the sense of enclosure. Landscaping is included within this space which again includes a water feature, tree planting and an area of lawn. There is also some hard landscaping such as paving that would be expected in such a space and seating. The rear of the building has also been designed to embrace views out to this space with glazing incorporated for the east facing elevation together with good sized windows for the two flanking walls that frame the Wilderness Garden. Overall, the space is well thought out and would provide a valuable asset for the future users of the building. To control entry to the rear of the building, this space will be fenced off linking to a secure cordon around the main car park.



Figure 8: The Wilderness Garden to the rear of the building with soft landscaping within a courtyard setting

- The Wilderness Buffer is located to the east and north of the building and provides a green finger wrapping these sensitive elevations. Again, the use of this space has been well thought out with SUDS features incorporated into the design together with wildflower planting and trees. These will deliver a good range of habitats once established for biodiversity.
- The Car Park is located to the south of the building. Whilst this area is more practical in nature, again regard has been made in terms of the site constraints. The parking area would provide an important buffer between the Grade II Listed Citadel and the proposed building which reduces the impact of the additional bulk and massing for the new facility when compared to the existing temporary office block buildings. This means that the Heritage Officer supports the design approach – see below for further details. The applicant has also considered the layout of this space with the service yard tucked towards the rear of the building. Tree planting is well distributed throughout the parking space and there is a green triangle located adjacent to the building with a SUDS pond. In addition, the parking spaces will be block paved which means that there is a contrast from the tarmac access roads. Taking these all into account, these design considerations will help to soften this space.

22. In terms of the detailed design of the building, this has been carefully thought through. As advised, the building footprint takes on a form of a 'W' shape with the main office accommodation on the north and south wings and more informal accommodation and internal circulation space within the glazed element for the central atrium. The wings have a high quality form of cladding which sets them apart from the central element while helping to decrease the visual impact of the building. The sustainable design has been a key consideration in the buildings overall design from inception to aspire to be net zero as further disused below. Detailed design features such as the windows have been factored in to this to manage solar gain and there are smaller windows proposed on the south, east

and west façades when compared to larger openings on the northern aspect. This will contribute to the sustainability of the building.

Design conclusion

23. Both the detailed design of the building and landscaping strategy have been well thought through by the applicant and their design team. Taking the facility as a whole, the design approach responds well to the constraints of the site including the designated Area of Urban Landscape Value. The Citadel, North and South Lodge and The Wilderness. The existing constraints have been used as opportunities to inform the design and layout of the building which underpins the principles of good design. This has been well articulated through the submitted documents. The facility, once built should be a local landmark and contributes to the designated environment that it will be located in.

24. In summary, the design approach is in accordance advice provided by the NPPF, relevant Core Strategy and MDD policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance and is of high quality.

Residential amenity: the impact upon existing neighbouring properties

25. Core Strategy policy CP3 requires that new development should be of a high quality of design that does not cause detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users. Separation standards for new residential development are set out in section 4.7 of the Borough Design Guide.

26. The application site is located some 80m from North and South Lodge which are the closest residential dwellings to the new facility. This is in excess of any of the standards outlined in the Borough Design Guide for overlooking, overbearing or loss of light. The distances are also greater to any of the residential dwellings located on Wilderness Road, Whiteknights Road or any halls of residences on Whiteknights Campus. On this basis, given the scale and proposed siting of the building, the proposed development is acceptable.

Residential amenity – noise

27. With regards to noise associated with the construction of the facility, building activities would be temporary and can be controlled by hours restrictions together with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (Construction Environmental Management Plan) subject to condition 12. Construction traffic would be required to enter the site from Earley Gate.

28. Due to the nature of the proposed use as offices and proposed siting of the building, it is not anticipated that the end use of the facility and noise associated with access etc would cause any significant disruption to neighbouring sites.

29. Overall, the application has been assessed with regards to this aspect by the Environmental Health Officer who supports the approach. On this basis and given the relationships outlined above, it is considered that during the construction phase and operational use of the site would not result in any significant harm to the amenity of the existing residents. This is in accordance with policies CP1 and CP3 and supplementary planning guidance.

Security

30. As advised above, given the sites international status, the site takes into security into account with a secure perimeter for staff. The car park has controlled security barriers

upon entry and this area, and the service yard is fenced off. Access to the main entrance will be controlled by a reception area. Overall, the design approach in respect to this aspect has been well considered and is acceptable.

Sustainable Design and Construction

31. Core Strategy Policy CP1 requires development to contribute towards the goal of achieving zero carbon development by including on-site renewable energy features and minimising energy and water consumption. MDD LP policies CC04, CC05 and the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (May 2010) also emphasise this. More recent guidance is provided by the Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement Wokingham Borough Council 2022.

32. The applicant is accompanied by a Sustainability Statement which sets out the approach taken for the design of the building and how sustainability has been one of the driving factors in regards in how the form of the facility has evolved. The building will target Net Zero targets in line with other new government buildings.

33. To achieve this, the building design incorporates solar panels and air source heat pumps for heating and hot water. It also incorporates BREEAM principles for the design of the building fabric and insulation process. This will help to manage under or overheating for the facility. The building is seeking to meet a rating of BREEAM Excellent with the aspiration to achieve further credits.

34. Taken as a whole, the sustainability approach means that the building should achieve 68% of carbon savings compared to the policy requirement of 10% reduction.

35. The approach shows a strong commitment to sustainability through seeking to achieve above policy requirements in this respect and pays regard for the updated 2022 Interim Policy advice. The measures will be controlled by condition 20.

Access and movement

36. The NPPF seeks to encourage sustainable means of transport and a move away from the reliance of the private motor car. Core Strategy policies CP1, CP4, CP6 and CP10 broadly echo these principles and indicate that development should mitigate any adverse effects on the existing highway network. The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA) which assesses the impact of development in respect to the site itself and wider highway network.

37. The TA has been assessed by the Highways Officer and further details in respect to highway impacts associated with the proposed use of the facility are outlined below.

Access and movement – sustainable transport

38. The site is well served by existing public transport routes with key links served via buses on the A329 at the Three Tuns Bus Stop and more locally, Earley Gate. These fall within the four hundred meter catchment zones for easy access on foot as shown in Figure 9 below.

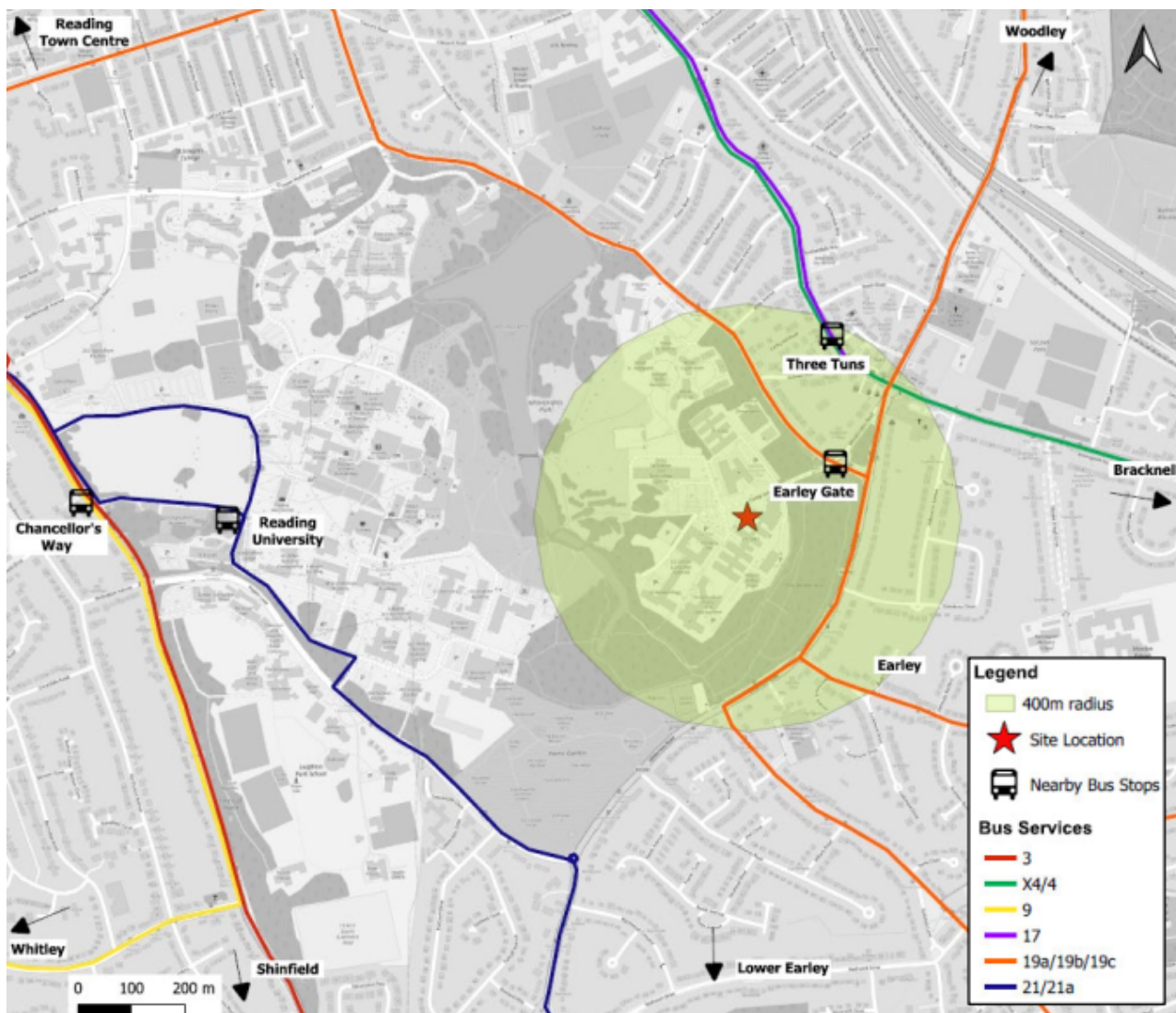


Figure 9: Bus Stop proximity to the site

39. In total, ten bus services operate near the site with six of these being within the 400m catchment isochrone as identified in Figure 9. A further four can also be reached by foot although are located slightly further away. The closest service, the 19 buses has stops within a 3-minute walk for central Reading services and 7-minute walk for services to Woodley / Lower Earley Centre. These services have combined bus frequencies of every 20 minutes. More frequent services are served on the Reading Road A239 via the 17 and 4 / X4 bus services. These stops are located within 7 minute walk from the application site and with the routes combined have a less than 10 min peak time frequency to and from Central Reading to the stops at the Three Tuns. The 4 and X4 service has a broadly 20 min frequency from the Three Tuns onwards to Bracknell via Wokingham.

40. In addition, the site is within walking distance to Earley train station. Whilst this is not within the 400m catchment, it is just under a mile away with a walk time of around 20 minutes. This provides links to the wider area with services to Reading and Wokingham.

41. As such, it is considered that the site has excellent sustainable transport links that will encourage travel away from the motorcar. When compared to the existing facility in Shinfield, whilst this has good links, there is a greater frequency of service and more destinations are served for the proposed relocation of the building to the Whiteknights

facility. This should encourage an increased use of public transport which will be monitored by the Travel Plan.

42. It is acknowledged that the bus stops serving the 19 route outside of Whiteknights campus could be upgraded. This is acknowledged by the applicant and funding will be secured through the Section 106 agreement to fund sustainable transport improvements which could be directed to these facilities.

43. For pedestrian and cycle movements, these are provided along the main routes that would serve the site. There is additional permeability towards Reading through Whiteknights Campus for these users via links within Whiteknights Campus.

Access and movement - impact on wider highway network

44. By road, the site would be predominantly accessed via the A329 and the A327. At a more local level, Wilderness Road would serve the site from the A329. Elm Road from Lower Earley Centre and Elms Road and Wilderness Road would provide links from the A327. The main access routes are within easy reach of the wider strategic transport network such as the M4 Motorway and A329(M).

45. Within Whiteknights Campus the site would be accessed via Earley Gate which is the access point defined by the Grade II North and South Lodge and this connects onto Whiteknights Road. An existing four arm roundabout would serve the site internally. There are no significant changes proposed to the main links into the site although there is some rationalising of access within the site.

46. The impact on local junctions and trip generation on the wider highway network have been agreed with both Reading and Wokingham Borough Councils. Trip generation to inform this has been derived from the existing ECMWF at Shinfield which is clearly comparable. The Wokingham Strategic Traffic Model has been used as a basis for the highway impact assessment. For the main access route and access into the site from Whiteknights Road via Earley gate, the data suggest that there would be no significant impacts.

47. The modelling does however show an impact at the junction serving Whiteknights Road / B3350 Wilderness Road which currently operates at or over capacity. The relocation of the facility would add 2.3% traffic in the AM peak and 1.4% in the PM peak. This is not considered to be a significant increase in vehicle movements and is unlikely to be discernible to users during these times in the context of existing traffic. The Travel Plan will offer mitigation and it is likely that given that there is a wider provision of public transport as set out above, trip rates may fall. Overall, it is not considered that the localised impact on traffic is severe in the context of the NPPF and as such this is acceptable.

48. As part of the application process, Reading Borough Council have been consulted and in terms of trip generation and movements they have recommended the following reason for refusal:

The proposed layout fails to assess the full trip generation impact by the development on the surrounding Highway Network. The Highway Authority are therefore unable to ensure sufficient spare capacity during peak periods to accommodate the proposed development in safety and without delay. As a result, it would be in conflict with Policy CC07 of the Wokingham Borough Managing

49. Whilst the letter of objection from Reading Borough Council is noted, the additional vehicle movements is not at an extent that would trigger any junction improvements and this development on its own cannot be expected to mitigate existing impacts. Furthermore, mitigation will be provided through the travel plan together with contributions for transport improvements which will be secured through the Section 106 agreement and which should encourage modal shift. These should relieve pressure specifically caused by this development on the junctions identified as already under pressure. Moreover, officers are not aware of any planned upgrades to these junctions which would improve them. It is therefore considered given the scale of the development and taking into account the projected trip rates, that on balance, the facility cannot be expected to make any local junction upgrades.

50. This view is taking into account the CIL tests which state that obligations should only be sought where they are:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

It is not considered that given the scale of the development and associated trip movements would meet the criteria outlined in regulation 122 of the CIL regulations.

Access and movement – internal layout and parking

51. Internally there the site layout has considered the future needs of the building. An uncontrolled secure drop off loop is located to the front of the building which as mentioned above, incorporates a shared surface and a dedicated pedestrian / cycle link to the building via landscaped grounds. The drop off loop has been tracked for buses and it includes an area for setting down of passengers accessing the site via car or taxi. This area has 10 cycle parking spaces included. A further 80 cycle spaces will be incorporated into storage within the building which would provide easy access facilities for the future occupants of the building.

52. The main car parking area is accessed via the existing four arm roundabout via Spin Way and Tikes Drive and as mentioned has a secure barrier entry system with a security hut to control vehicle movements to the main parking area. The parking is surface parking, and the bays will meet Wokingham Standards in terms of their geometry and tracking (2.5 x 5m). There is space for 216 car parking spaces which includes 11 disabled parking spaces. There would be 8 spaces for motorcycle parking. The internal access is shown in Figure 10 below.



Figure 10: internal access and parking layout for the site

53. For Electric Vehicle (EV) charging, there would be 26 EV bays provided. In addition, there would be passive EV provision for 1 in 5 spaces.

54. It is noted that Reading Borough Council in their letter of objection have recommended refusal for parking for the following reason:

The proposed development fails to demonstrate that it complies with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking and that existing parking on the application site can be removed. This could result in on-street parking surrounding the application site, adversely affecting road safety and the flow of traffic, and in conflict with Policy CC07 of the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan and Policy CP6 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy.

55. It is however not considered that this reason can be sustained. The existing parking surrounding the TOB1 building which used to serve the Arts School has since been relocated under permission granted under Reading Borough Council ref: 220941. Based on the loss of existing parking spaces in their comments t there is some ad hoc parking1.2km away from the site. Whilst it is acknowledged there is some parking on the

land, this appears to be a result of convenience due to the relocation of the previous uses of the site which has freed up this part of the University site and allowed parking to take place on this land. The parking appears to be mostly clustered towards the Agricultural Policy and Development Building. There are further alternative car park locations for users that have permits within the vicinity of the existing space.

56. It should also be noted that the University have prior approval to demolish the facilities for the TOB1 building which the red line for this approval includes the parking area. Since there are no restrictions on the use of this space, parking in this area can be restricted at any point in time. The parking for the ECMWF has been designed to cater for the use of the facility. Parking on street outside of the campus can be reviewed and parking restrictions brought in if required through the appropriate Traffic Regulation Order process.

Access and movement conclusion

57. The site has significant links to sustainable forms of transport by bus and rail which provide more options for destinations and a greater frequency of services than the existing site. This should encourage a shift towards fewer journeys made by private motor vehicle by the employees. Whilst there is some localised congestion during the peak hours, this is not considered to be significant. The site access and circulation has been well planned. Cycle storage facilities and welfare facilities have also been incorporated into the design. Overall, the access strategy and impact on the wider network is acceptable.

Flooding and Drainage

58. Core Strategy Policy CP1 and MDDL Policies CC09 and CC10 establish that new development should avoid increasing and where possible reduce flood risk (from all sources) by first developing in areas with lowest flood risk, carrying out a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) where required and managing surface water in a sustainable manner.

59. The site is in Flood Zone 1 where the risk of flooding is low and all uses, including less vulnerable uses which the building is classified as for the purposes of the sequential test are appropriate.

60. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which assess the impact of flooding on the application site. This identified flood risks across the whole site and propose measures to manage surface water runoff including the 1 in 30 year and 1 in 100-year storm events (+40% for climate change). It should be noted that there are a couple of small areas that are potentially vulnerable to surface water flooding (less than 30cm in depth). There are however no recorded records of flooding of these small plumes within the Wokingham Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

61. To ensure that the increase in surface water runoff associated with the additional built form is managed, a strategic approach to drainage is proposed. The proposed development incorporates SUDS features into the design which include attenuation basins, wetland areas, and geo-cellular storage. These will control discharge rates to nearby outfall points.

62. In respect to surface water, less vulnerable uses have been placed in the areas that are identified for surface water flooding such as car parking. In addition, ground modelling and filter drains will protect the building.

63. The Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage strategy propose measures on site have been assessed by the council's Drainage Officer. They have raised no objection to the proposed package of measures in terms of the impact to existing neighbouring sites and future occupiers of the building. On this basis the proposals are considered acceptable subject to condition 18.

Ecology

64. Core Strategy Policy CP7, carried forward by MDD LP Policy TB23, requires appropriate protection of species and habitats of conservation value. A detailed Ecological Impact Assessment and addendum to this has been submitted and demonstrates that the site layout has considered impacts on ecological permeability.

65. In terms of existing vegetation, the applicant has demonstrated that there would be an adequate buffer zone from the proposed development to these features.

66. There are a package of ecology mitigation measures and on and off-site enhancements and the Biodiversity Officer has assessed the application raises no objection. The delivery of the enhancements will be secured by condition which will deliver a biodiversity net gain of 10%.

Heritage

67. Policy TB14 sets out specific heritage advice for Whiteknights Campus with recognition for the historic landscape and contribution of the listed buildings. Policy TB24 of MDD LP policy seeks to ensure that development conserves and, where possible enhances the important character and special architectural or historic interest of listed buildings.

68. The nearest listed buildings to the development site is the Citadel which was built in the 1950s in response to the post Second World War nuclear threat for the Home Defence Region 6 (broadly covering Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire). The building is reasonably unique in terms of its method of construction and was one of only 13 of such facilities in the UK. This is located around 60 m from the main building.

69. South Lodge is located around 80m from the building to the north east with a greater level of separation to North Lodge.

70. The site also contains the TOB1 building, this was a temporary predominantly single storey office building that was constructed for the Second World War for government offices. This is however not a designated heritage asset and prior approval has been granted for demolition of this under 230483. It is not considered that the loss of this would have any great significance to the architectural or historic interest associated with the buildings.

71. Whiteknights Park is also a recognised Historic Park and Garden within the context of policy TB24 of the MDD DPD. The site was once a landscaped park originating from the 13th century although this was extensively landscaped in the mid-18th century. Around this time, The Wilderness was planted together with the formation of the lake. The wider area is now characterised by buildings that support the function of the University campus and associated uses. While the campus has developed over time, the existing buildings serving the University pay regard for the parkland setting as previously discussed.

72. In respect to the impact on the Citadel, the relationship of the proposed building to this heritage asset is acceptable. There is a good level of separation from the proposed building and the Citadel which is maintained for the surface car park. Landscaping has also been considered in the layout and a buffer provided towards the listed building. The high quality design of the building is important to mitigating any harm to the building. The Heritage Officer supports this approach subject to conditions 5 and 13.

73. There would be sufficient separation given the scale of the building to North and South Lodge. The siting of the ECWMF building would retain the views towards these as you exit the campus on Whiteknights Road. The Heritage Officer has raised no objections regarding these heritage assets.

74. In terms of the impact to Whiteknights Park, the identification of character areas for the proposed facility as outlined above goes a long way in reducing its impact on the landscape. The building would consolidate the existing sprawl of the TOB1 facility, and more emphasis has been placed on the landscaping around it that currently exists. The use of a good palette of materials for hardstanding such as block paving and shared surfaces also helps to break up the visual impact of the associated infrastructure such as car parking and access roads. This approach is supported by the proposed tree planting and water features. Overall, the new facility should enhance the landscape setting of this part of Whiteknights Campus.

75. The Heritage Officer has assessed the application and raises no objections to any aspect of the proposed development on any of the heritage assets. When balancing the public benefits, these will outweigh any harm associated to the Listed Buildings or Whiteknights Park as does the consideration of these in informing the site layout. It is therefore in accordance with the heritage considerations of the NPPF and Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan) 2014 Policies TB14 and TB24 Designated Heritage Assets.

Archaeology

76. Core Strategy Policy CP3 and MDD LP Policy TB25 require the archaeological impact of development to be taken into consideration. The application includes an archaeological assessment which has been reviewed by the Archaeology Officer.

77. The Archaeology Officer has assessed the report submitted in respect to this and raises no objections and no conditions are requested given the finding of the survey.

Community engagement

78. The application Planning Statement sets out the public engagement process and the events that were undertaken. These include an event at Whiteknights Campus, public online seminar and a dedicated website. This is an acceptable approach.

Minerals

79. The application is located within an identified Minerals Safeguarding Area wherein policy M2 of the Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan is of relevance. The site area however falls below the 3ha threshold which means that the site area would make any prior mineral extraction unviable. On this basis a Minerals Resource Assessment is not required or any need for prior extraction.

Conclusion

80. When weighing up the overall impact of the use of the facility and associated structures, it is considered that the sustainability measures will assist in reducing the environmental impact of the development. The function of the building will also generate a greater understanding of the implications of climate change for weather forecasting. This will generate significant benefits for society through a greater understanding of the environment and potential weather patterns and will help with economic development. All of these reflect strongly with the sustainability objectives outlined in local and national policy. These, when balanced outweigh, any significant harm to the listed buildings, local highway network, neighbour amenity, character of the area and landscape setting of the site. The design of the facility is considered to be of high quality and responds well to the relevant policies and supplementary planning guidance.

81. The application can therefore be recommended for approval subject to the requirements the resolution set out in Annex A wherein criteria A and B apply.

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: Recommendation and Conditions

That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the three tiered recommendation as set out below:

A. Completion of a legal agreement within 6 months of the committee resolution (unless a longer date is agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning and Chairman of Planning Committee) to:

- i. Sustainable transport contribution
- ii. Delivery of an Employment Skills Plan and / or contribution

Administrative clauses:

- iii. Section 106 Monitoring fee being the amount of reasonable fees in monitoring the performance and discharge of the Section 106 obligations,
- iv. The Council's reasonable legal fees in relation to the completion of the Section 106 agreement (whether or not the matter goes to completion),
- v. Indexation (all contributions and payments to be index-linked from the date of the decision to grant planning permission to the date of which payment is made, using BCIS index).

B. Conditions and informatives:

Timeframe for implementation

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).

Approved details

2. This permission is in respect of the following submitted application plans, and drawings received by the Local Planning Authority
 - Site Location Plan (ECMWF-BDP-MB-00-DR-A-000002 P02)
 - Site Plan (ECMWF-BDP-XX-XX-DR-L-900015 P03)
 - Landscape Masterplan (ECMWF-BDP-ZZ-00-DR-L-000001 P06)
 - Proposed Site Sections (ECMWF-BDP-MB-WB-DR-A-100110 P03)
 - Proposed Elevations - East and West (ECMWF-BDP-MB-EE-DR-A-100106 P02)
 - Proposed Elevations - North and South (ECMWF-BDP-MB-EE-DR-A-100107 P02)
 - Proposed Building Long Sections (ECMWF-BDP-MB-WB-DR-A-100109 P03)
 - Envelope Section (ECMWF-BDP-MB-WB-DR-A-100202 P02)
 - Planting Plan (Ref: ECMWF-BDP-XX-XX-DR-L-900016 Rev P02)
 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Ref: ECMWF-BDP-MB-00-DR-A-100101 Rev P02)
 - Proposed First Floor Plan (Ref: ECMWF-BDP-MB-01-DR-A-100102 Rev P02)
 - Proposed Second Floor Plan (Ref: ECMWF-BDP-MB-01-DR-A-100103 Rev P02)
 - Proposed Third Floor Plan (ECMWF-BDP-MB-03-DR-A-100104 Rev P02)

- Proposed Roof Plan (ECMWF-BDP-MB-RF-DR-A-100105 Rev P02)

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.

Hours of construction work

3. 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.

Delivery hours / restriction on use

4. No deliveries shall take place including loading and unloading between the hours of 22:00 and 07:00 Monday to Sunday inclusive unless first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard residential amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

Materials

5. Notwithstanding the details on the approved plans, prior to commencement of works that are not associated with demolition works and site enabling works, samples and details of the type and colour of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building, gates and fencing shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the so-approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the buildings are acceptable in terms of the character and appearance of the area. Relevant policy CP1 and CP3.

Highways

6. Prior to commencement of works that are not associated with demolition works and site enabling works, full details of the construction of roads and footways, including levels, widths, construction materials, depths of construction, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The roads and footways shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details to road base level before the development is occupied and the final wearing course will be provided within 3 months of occupation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The accesses shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and used for no other purpose and the land within the visibility splays shall be maintained clear of any visual obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times.

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

7. The development shall be occupied in accordance with the approved travel plan ref prepared by RPS (ref ECMWF-RPS-ZZ-WS-RP-X17204) dated September 2023. The travel plan shall be implemented, maintained and reviewed as approved.

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

8. Save in relation to any construction activity, 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.

9. No building shall be occupied until secure and covered (staff only spaces) 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 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

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

10. The development shall be occupied in accordance with the approved Delivery and Service Management Plan prepared by RPS (ref ECMWF-RPS-ZZ-WS-RP-X-17205) dated September 2023. The Delivery and Servicing Plan will be implemented as approved and maintained.

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

11. Prior to commencement of development hereby permitted, details for electric vehicle charging points serving the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The electric vehicle charging points shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved

before any part of development hereby permitted is first brought into use and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the charging of electric vehicles and used for no other purpose.

Reason: To ensure that sufficient dedicated electric vehicle charging facilities are provided to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. In accordance with NPPF Section 9 (Promoting Sustainable Transport), WBC Climate Emergency Action Plan, WBC Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

Construction Environment Management Plan

12. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which shall include details including construction access(es) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Construction shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with each approved CEMP. The CEMP shall include the following matters:

- a) a construction travel protocol or Green Travel plan for the construction phase including details of parking and turning for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors;
- b) loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- c) storage of plant and materials;
- d) programme of works (including measures for traffic management and operating hours);
- e) piling techniques;
- f) provision of boundary hoarding;
- g) protection of the aquatic environment in terms of water quantity and quality;
- h) details of proposed means of dust suppression and noise mitigation;
- i) details of measures to prevent mud from vehicles leaving the site during construction;
- j) details of any site construction office, compound and ancillary facility buildings. These facilities shall be sited away from woodland areas;
- k) lighting on site during construction;
- l) measures to ensure no on site fires during construction
- m) monitoring and review mechanisms;
- n) implementation of the CEMP through an environmental management system;
- o) details of the haul routes to be used to access the development; and
- p) details of the temporary surface water management measures to be provided during the construction phase
- q) details of the excavation of materials and the subsurface construction methodology
- r) Details of mitigation measures for protected species to be applied.
- s) appointment of a Construction Liaison Officer.
- t) measures to limit the impact of the construction process on badgers as set out in section 5.2.6 of the submitted Ecological Assessment (RPS Group, ref: ECMWF-RPS-ZZ-WS-RP-X-01939 Ecological Assessment 06, June 2023)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety & convenience and neighbour amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and policy TB23 of the MDD

DPD Local Plan and to protect species of principal importance.

Landscape and trees

13. i) With the exception of works that are associated with demolition works and site enabling works no further development shall commence until full details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. The details shall include, as appropriate:
1. scheme drawings;
 2. proposed levels and contours;
 3. detailed design of SuDS features in accordance with the SuDS Strategy, demonstrating how they will be integrated into the wider landscape, with attenuation features having a natural shape and shallow profile allowing them to fulfil amenity, ecological and drainage functions;
 4. soft landscaping details including planting plans, schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate;
 5. a Landscape Specification document covering soft landscaping (including site preparation, cultivation, plant handling and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment) and hard landscaping including all construction works such as paths, water features and any other feature;
 6. details and specification of the tree planting pits in the car park and use of structural soils under the adjacent hard surfaces, demonstrating that the trees have sufficient rooting volume to enable their successful retention and long term health;
 7. hard landscaping materials including samples;
 8. minor artefacts and structures (e.g. street furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs, external services);
 9. measures to ensure ecological permeability through the means of enclosures
- ii) 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: 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

14. No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting of any tree that tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its 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) The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement prepared by RPS (ref: ECMWF-RPS-ZZ-WS-RP-X-00780) dated September 2023 which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).
- b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works (apart from those demolition works covered under prior approval ref 230483), soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place on site.
- c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.
- d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority has first been sought and obtained.

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

Ecology / lighting

16. Prior to commencement of any works for the installation of the lighting (including any infrastructure or servicing to supply them) a lighting strategy shall be submitted for approval to the Local Planning Authority. This shall take into account a design strategy for biodiversity for the site and the strategy shall:
- a) Identify those areas/features that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance; and
- b) Show how and where external lighting will be installed (through provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species having access to their breeding sites and resting places.

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specification and locations set out in the strategy and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure compliance with policy TB23 and protect species of principal importance.

17. Prior to commencement of development, detailed plans for biodiversity enhancements in line with the recommendations of section 5.3.2 of the submitted Ecological Assessment (RPS Group, ref: ECMWF-RPS-ZZ-WS-RP-X-01939 Ecological Assessment 06, June 2023) shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority for its approval. Once approved, the strategy shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority in writing.

Reason: to ensure that the proposal is in accordance with Section 41 NERC Act re. UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (Species of Principal Importance), and complies with Planning Policies for Wildlife including CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), and the National Planning Policy Framework which requires consideration of the potential biodiversity gains that can be secured within developments.

Drainage

18. No development shall take place until full details of the drainage system for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include:

1. Calculations indicating the Greenfield runoff rate from the site.
2. BRE 365 test results demonstrating whether infiltration is achievable or not.
3. Use of SuDS following the SuDS hierarchy, preferably infiltration.
4. Full calculations demonstrating the capacity of attenuation features to cater for 1 in 100 year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change and runoff controlled at Greenfield rates, or preferably better.
5. As connection to an existing surface water sewer is proposed, we need to see confirmation from the utilities supplier that their system has got capacity and the connection is acceptable.
6. Separate drainage systems for any proposed adopted highways and residential dwellings.
7. A drainage strategy plan indicating the location and sizing of SuDS features.
8. Details demonstrating how any SuDS for this development would be managed throughout the lifespan of the development and who will be responsible for maintenance.

The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development and shall be maintained in the approved form for as long as the development remains on the site.

*Reason: This is to prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off.
Relevant policy: NPPF (2019) Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.*

19. No development shall be occupied until confirmation has been provided that either:-
- I. Surface water capacity exists off site to serve the development or
 - II. A development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with the Local Authority in consultation with Thames Water. Where a

- development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed, no occupation shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan. Or
- III. All Surface water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed.

Reason: Network reinforcement works may be required to accommodate the proposed development. Relevant policy Core Strategy policy CP1

Sustainability

20. Within twelve months, or an amended timescale first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, of first occupation of the development, a Post-Construction Certificate in respect of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Post-Development Certificate shall be prepared by an accredited assessor and shall demonstrate compliance with BREEAM rating of 'Excellent' as a minimum.

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development in accordance with the submitted application documents. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04 and CC05.

Permitted Development restrictions

21. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no overhead wire cables or other form of overhead servicing shall be placed over or used in the development within the application site or subsequently.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the buildings and hard surfaced areas is satisfactory. Relevant policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Wokingham Core Strategy.

Biodiversity Net Gain

22. The development will achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain, in accordance with the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Ref: ECMWF-BDP-LA-XX-AR-Y-0001 Rev 01), with the maintenance and management of that biodiversity net gain covering a period of 30 years.

Reason: To ensure that the development provides sufficient mitigation for Biodiversity. Relevant Policy: NPPF, Environment Act, Core Strategy Policy CP7, MDD DPD Policy TB23.

Informatives

1. The applicant is advised that the Council seeks that employers or developers within the borough commit to using local labour / contractors where possible. This should include:

- Advertisement of jobs within local recruitment agencies / job centres;
- Recruitment and training of residents from the local area;

- Seek tender of local suppliers or contractors for work.
2. The applicant is advised that the planning approval should be read in conjunction with the S106 dated **INSERT** - *Officer note: S106 being finalised date to be updated when this has been sealed.*
 3. The applicant is informed that parking may need to be restricted along the main routes and on turning heads.
 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 Corporate Head of Environment on tel: 0118 974 6302.
 5. Any such works or events commissioned by the developer and particularly those involving the connection of any utility to the site, shall be co-ordinated by them in liaison with Wokingham Borough Council's Street Works Team, (telephone 01189 746302). This must take place at least three months in advance of the works and particularly to ensure that statutory undertaker connections/supplies to the site are coordinated to take place wherever possible at the same time.
 6. The attention of the applicant is drawn to the requirements of Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in respect of the minimisation of noise on construction and demolition sites. Application, under Section 61 of the Act, for prior consent to the works, can be made to the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager.
 7. Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx. 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.
 8. There are public sewers crossing or close to your development. If you're planning significant work near our sewers, it's important that you minimize the risk of damage. We'll need to check that your development doesn't limit repair or maintenance activities or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read our guide working near or diverting our pipes.
<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdevelopers.thameswater.co.uk%2FDeveloping-a-large-site%2FPlanning-your-development%2FWorking-near-or-diverting-our-pipes&data=04%7C01%7Cplanning.enquiries%40wokingham.gov.uk%7Ce6990f35acd64955d6e908d8da524faa%7C996ee15c0b3e4a6f8e65120a9a51821a%7C0%7C0%7C637499394353420176%7CUnknown%7CTWfpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoimC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQljoiv2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=YuYxiQmrBSYI9ZMRs96nF4NN8%2Fda5MltbRgnOO6lyEg%3D&reserved=0>.
 9. There are water mains crossing or close to your development. Thames Water do NOT permit the building over or construction within 3m of water mains. If you're planning significant works near our mains (within 3m) we'll need to check that your development doesn't reduce capacity, limit repair or maintenance activities during and after construction, or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read our guide working near or diverting our pipes.
<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdevelopers.thameswater.co.uk%2FDeveloping-a-large-site%2FPlanning-your-development%2FWorking-near-or-diverting-our-pipes&data=04%7C01%7Cplanning.enquiries%40wokingham.gov.uk%7Ce6990f35acd64955d6e908d8da524faa%7C996ee15c0b3e4a6f8e65120a9a51821a%7C0%7C0%7C637499394353420176%7CUnknown%7CTWfpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoimC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQljoiv2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=YuYxiQmrBSYI9ZMRs96nF4NN8%2Fda5MltbRgnOO6lyEg%3D&reserved=0>.

ameswater.co.uk%2FDeveloping-a-large-site%2FPlanning-your-development%2FWorking-near-or-diverting-our-pipes&data=04%7C01%7Cplanning.enquiries%40wokingham.gov.uk%7Ce6990f35acd64955d6e908d8da524faa%7C996ee15c0b3e4a6f8e65120a9a51821a%7C0%7C0%7C637499394353430171%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWlloiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=HOoRkv2%2Bsn69rJh9oVV4Coxaaf%2BzrSVzS2OXvA6wgCc%3D&reserved=0

10. Fire service access should comply with B5 of ADB Volume 1 2019 with additional local requirements below under the Berkshire Act 1986:

- Fire service vehicles currently operated by Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service exceed the requirements stated in the current edition of Approved Document B. The applicant should be made aware of the following amendments:-
- The minimum carrying capacity for a pumping appliance is 16 tonnes.
- The minimum carrying capacity for a high reach appliance is 26 tonnes. Structures such as bridges should have the full vehicle carrying capacity.

Any structural fire precautions and all means of escape provision will have to satisfy Building Regulation requirement. These matters are administered by the local authority Building Control or approved inspectors, who you are advised to contact in this regard.

C) Alternative recommendation

That the committee authorise the Head of Development Management to refuse planning permission in the event of an S106 agreement not being completed to secure the services and infrastructure within six months of the date of the committee resolution (unless a longer period is agreed by the Head of Development Management in consultation with the Chairman of Planning Committee) for the following reasons:

- 1) In the absence of a planning obligation to secure suitable contributions / on site and off works for the following:
 - Sustainable transport contributions
 - Employment Skills Plan Contributions
 - Section 106 Monitoring fee being the amount of reasonable fees in monitoring the performance and discharge of the Section 106 obligations,
 - The Council's reasonable legal fees in relation to the completion of the Section 106 agreement (whether or not the matter goes to completion),
 - Indexation (all contributions and payments to be index-linked from the date of the decision to grant planning permission to the date of which payment is made, using BCIS index).

It has not been possible to secure the adequate mitigation put forward to justify the development and the proposal could have a detrimental impact on

ecology. This is contrary to the principles of Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, and CP6, MDD DPD policy TB23 together with the NPPF and Environment Act 2021.

APPENDIX 2 - Parish Council Comments

PLANNING REF : 232475
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Radstock House
: Radstock Lane, Earley, Wokingham
: RG6 5UL
SUBMITTED BY : Earley Town Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 08/11/2023

COMMENTS:

ETC raises no objection to this application. However, ETC would ask that the Transport Assessment addresses residents concerns about the suitability of the Earley Gate junction for the level of development and that on-street parking pressures are addressed, including parking controls.

In addition ETC would like to see the use of non-car modes of transport, such as cycling, fully promoted.