

Design and Access Statement

Whiteknights Campus Boundary Fence Replacement



University of
Reading

Client:	University of Reading
Document No.:	30303 NPA WK XX RP L 1001
Revision:	P02
Status:	For Planning
Print Size:	A4
Date:	30/04/2026

NICHOLAS PEARSON ASSOCIATES

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | ECOLOGY | VISUALISATION

npaconsult.co.uk npavisuals.co.uk +44 (0)1225 876990

The Farm House, Church Farm Business Park, Corston, Bath BA2 9AP

Document Control

Project: Whiteknights Campus Boundary Fence Replacement

Project No: 30303

Document Title: Design and Access Statement

Document No: 30303 NPA WK XX RP L 1001

--

Original document

X

Revision

P02

Revision letter

	Name	Signature	Position	Date
Prepared by:	Tom Brickell	<i>T.Brickell</i>	Associate Director	30/04/2026
Checked by:	Jamie Farnell	<i>C.J.Farnell</i>	Director	30/04/2026
Approved by:	Jamie Farnell	<i>C.J.Farnell</i>	Director	30/04/2026

Revision Record

Rev letter	Date prepared	Prepared by	Checker / Approver	Description of changes
P01	01/05/2026	TB	JF	Updated description of gate to be removed on Whitekights Rd.

© Nicholas Pearson Associates Ltd. All rights reserved. Nicholas Pearson Associates assert (unless otherwise agreed in writing) their rights under s.77 to 89 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This document has been prepared in good faith, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, based on information provided or available at the time of its preparation and within the scope of work agreement with the client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by Nicholas Pearson Associates Ltd., unless otherwise expressly stated in the document.

We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. The document is provided for the sole use of the named client. No third party may rely upon this document without the prior and express written agreement of Nicholas Pearson Associates.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | ECOLOGY | VISUALISATION

npaconsult.co.uk npavisuals.co.uk +44 (0)1225 876990

The Farm House, Church Farm Business Park, Corston, Bath BA2 9AP

Nicholas Pearson Associates Ltd. Registered Office: as above. Company Reg. No: 02715105. VAT Reg. No: 398 1148 22



ISEP
CORPORATE
PARTNERSHIPS



Contents

Introduction.....1

Objectives 1

Project Team.....2

2.0 Site Context 2

Site Description 2

Planning Policy Context 3

Local Historic Park and Garden.....4

Listed Buildings 5

Archaeology.....5

Public Rights of Way 6

3.0 Proposals.....6

Appearance 6

Use and Amount 8

Access.....8

Environmental Considerations 9

4.0 Conclusion 11

Introduction

- 1.1 This document has been prepared in support of a planning application for the replacement of existing boundary fencing and gates at **Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading**.
- 1.2 The Site lies within the administrative areas of Reading Borough Council (RBC) and Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). This Design and Access Statement relates to a planning application submission to WBC. A separate application is to be submitted to RBC at a similar time for works within its jurisdiction.
- 1.3 The application site is defined by the red line boundary on Drawing 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-3001 (Site Location Plan) and comprises the sections of the Whiteknights Campus boundary fencing within Wokingham Borough Council's administrative area. The proposed site area is 1,699.7m².
- 1.4 The proposals relate to the removal of the existing aging and failing boundary fencing and its replacement with a new metal fencing and gate system, substantially following the existing campus boundary fence alignment. The works are limited to boundary infrastructure and do not involve any change of use or extension of the developed footprint of the campus. The proposals constitute minor development in the form of routine estate maintenance and enhancement of existing campus infrastructure.
- 1.5 This statement draws on coordinated technical inputs prepared in support of the planning application, including arboricultural and ecological assessments.
- 1.6 The application seeks full planning permission for boundary fencing and gates within Wokingham Borough, with no works proposed beyond the established campus boundary.

Objectives

- 1.7 The key objectives of the proposed development are to:
 - Replace existing boundary fencing with a consistent, durable and high-quality fencing system;
 - Improve the visual coherence of the campus external appearance, while maintaining appropriate boundary definition and security;
 - Direct visitors to the campus to use the formal main gate locations for access and orientation;
 - Ensure the replacement fencing and gates respond sensitively to existing landscape character, trees and vegetation;
 - Deliver the works safely and in accordance with current arboricultural and ecological best practice.

Project Team

- **Client:** University of Reading
- Planning Consultant: Stantec
- Lead Designer, Landscape Architecture and Ecology: Nicholas Pearson Associates Ltd
- Heritage Consultant: Stantec
- Arboricultural Consultant: Challice Consulting Ltd

2.0 Site Context

Site Description

- 2.1 The application site comprises sections of the external boundary of Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading, within the administrative area of Wokingham Borough Council. The campus boundary typically abuts public highways, footways and public routes and is generally characterised by a soft, vegetated edge formed by mature trees, hedgerows and grass verges.
- 2.2 The landscape setting of the campus has previously been assessed on behalf of the University of Reading, defining a series of campus Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) across Whiteknights Campus. The sections of boundary affected by the proposed fencing within Wokingham Borough fall within, or are influenced by, Landscape Character Areas B (Northern Neighbourhood), C (Whiteknights Valley Lakes and Wilderness), E (Southern Learning – Pepper Lane Gate Area), F (Harris Garden) and G (Earley Gate Park).
- 2.3 Despite differences in internal character across these areas, they share a relatively consistent perimeter landscape quality, characterised by mature woodland, tree belts, hedgerows and parkland planting that provide a visually soft and enclosed campus edge. Views across the boundary are typically filtered through vegetation rather than dominated by built form, reinforcing the historic parkland origins of Whiteknights Park and the overarching 'University in a Park' character. Along Whiteknights Road, Pepper Lane and at Earley Gate in particular, the campus boundary is experienced as part of a treed and enclosed landscape edge, with boundary treatments perceived as visually subordinate elements within a wider structure of planting and landform.
- 2.4 Within this landscape context, the existing boundary fencing does not respond consistently to the character or quality of its setting. The current boundary treatment reflects incremental installation and repair over time, rather than a coordinated or unified approach to campus perimeter design. Existing boundary elements include a mix of chain-link mesh fencing, close-board timber fencing and isolated

sections of vertical bar metal railings, resulting in a piecemeal and visually inconsistent appearance along different sections of the campus edge.

- 2.5 In several locations, existing chain-link mesh fencing is damaged or deteriorated, such that it no longer forms a neat, clearly defined or robust boundary. These areas detract from the visual quality of the campus perimeter, weaken legibility of the campus edge, and sit uncomfortably within an otherwise high-quality landscaped setting. In places, the condition and appearance of the fencing also reduce its effectiveness in providing a secure and well-managed boundary treatment.
- 2.6 As a result, while the wider campus perimeter benefits from strong landscape structure and mature planting, the existing boundary fencing does not consistently reflect this quality or character. These baseline conditions inform the proposed approach to replacement fencing, which seeks to resolve identified inconsistencies and deterioration while responding positively to the established landscape character of the campus edge.

Planning Policy Context

- 2.7 Development proposals within Wokingham Borough are assessed against the adopted Development Plan, comprising the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014), the Central and East Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2023), and saved policies of the South East Plan, including Policy NRM6 (Natural Resource Management).
- 2.8 While the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and South East Plan policies are not directly relevant to the nature or location of the proposed boundary works, they nonetheless form part of the statutory Development Plan and are therefore noted for completeness.
- 2.9 In particular, the following adopted policies of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) are relevant to the design and landscape aspects of the proposed development:
- Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) of the Core Strategy, which promotes development that responds positively to its environmental and spatial context;
 - Policy CP7 (Biodiversity) of the Core Strategy, which seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity assets and avoid harm to ecological interests;
 - Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping), which seeks to retain and protect landscape features, trees and vegetation;

- Policy TB21 (Landscape Character), which requires development to conserve and enhance local landscape character and respond appropriately to landscape sensitivity;
- Policy TB23 (Biodiversity and Development), which requires development proposals to avoid harm to biodiversity, provide appropriate mitigation where impacts cannot be avoided, and deliver opportunities for ecological enhancement;
- Policy TB24 (Listed Buildings and Designated Heritage Assets), insofar as the proposals have potential implications for the setting of nearby Listed Buildings; and
- Policy TB14 (University of Reading), which relates specifically to development within Whiteknights Campus and supports proposals that respect its landscape, heritage and campus character.

2.10 Together, these adopted policies establish a clear requirement for development within Whiteknights Campus to respond positively to landscape character, protect green infrastructure, respect heritage assets and deliver high-quality, context-led design.

2.11 In addition, the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (2023–2040), currently under examination, is a material consideration. While not yet adopted, its emerging policies reinforce the objectives of the adopted plan in respect of landscape protection, biodiversity, and high-quality place-responsive design.

2.12 The proposed development has been designed to accord with both adopted and emerging policy and raises no conflict with the overall spatial strategy for the area.

Local Historic Park and Garden

2.13 The eastern half of Whiteknights Campus, which lies within Wokingham Borough Council, is identified as a Local Historic Park and Garden (Whiteknights Park). The identified landscape is described as *“a landscape park possibly since the late 13th century, now a university campus.”*

2.14 The proposed boundary works do not alter the historic layout or character of the parkland. The replacement fencing follows the existing boundary alignment and introduces a visually lightweight and permeable boundary treatment that allows the parkland edge character to remain legible. Accordingly, the proposals would not impact the setting of the Local Historic Park and Garden and comply with relevant heritage policies. The proposals therefore accord with Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

2.15 Further information on this is set out in the Heritage Statement produced by Stantec.

Listed Buildings

- 2.16 Whiteknights Campus contains several Listed Buildings located close to the campus boundary, including:
- **The Lodge**, Whiteknights Road (Grade II, Ref. 1319122)
 - **Foxhill House**, Whiteknights Park (Grade II*, Ref. 1136050)
 - **Former Stables and Coach House**, Whiteknights Park (Grade II, Ref. 1271248)
 - **North Lodge**, Whiteknights Road (Grade II, Ref. 1136059)
 - **South Lodge**, Whiteknights Road (Grade II, Ref. 111828)
- 2.17 The proposed fencing does not physically alter or attach to any Listed Building. The design, height and material finish of the replacement fencing have been carefully considered to ensure that there is no harm to the significance of the Listed Buildings, including through effects on their setting and heritage interests. The boundary treatment is intentionally visually subservient to the lodges and their landscaped surroundings. Accordingly, the proposals would preserve the significance of the Listed Buildings and comply with relevant heritage policies.
- 2.18 Historic mapping indicates a long-established gated presence at this location from the late nineteenth century onwards. The existing timber gates appear to be of later origin and are not considered to comprise a curtilage-listed structure. Nonetheless, the form, material and appearance of the gate contribute to the experience of arrival and approach and therefore form part of the setting in which the Listed Buildings are experienced.
- 2.19 The reasons for proposing metal gates in place of a design replicating the existing timber gates, and the assessment of any implications arising from this change, are examined in the accompanying Heritage Statement prepared by Stantec. That document should be read alongside this Design and Access Statement.

Archaeology

- 2.20 Archaeology is not considered a constraint to the proposals. Due to the limited and localised nature of the works, they would not result in significant ground disturbance, and archaeological considerations are not considered necessary.

Public Rights of Way

- 2.21 A public right of way footpath (EARL6) crosses Whiteknights Campus and intersects the campus boundary at Earley Gates, between North Lodge and South Lodge.
- 2.22 The proposals retain the existing point of access and do not introduce any changes to the route or use of the public right of way.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 The proposals comprise the removal of the existing boundary fencing and gates of varied design and poor condition and their replacement with a new metal railing system and associated access gates. The proposed fence alignment generally follows the existing boundary line, with localised adjustments where required to respond to trees, services, and site constraints.
- 3.2 The site location and extent of proposed fencing are shown on Drawing 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-3001 (Site Location Plan) and Drawing 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-3010 (Site Plan Overview Sheet).

Appearance

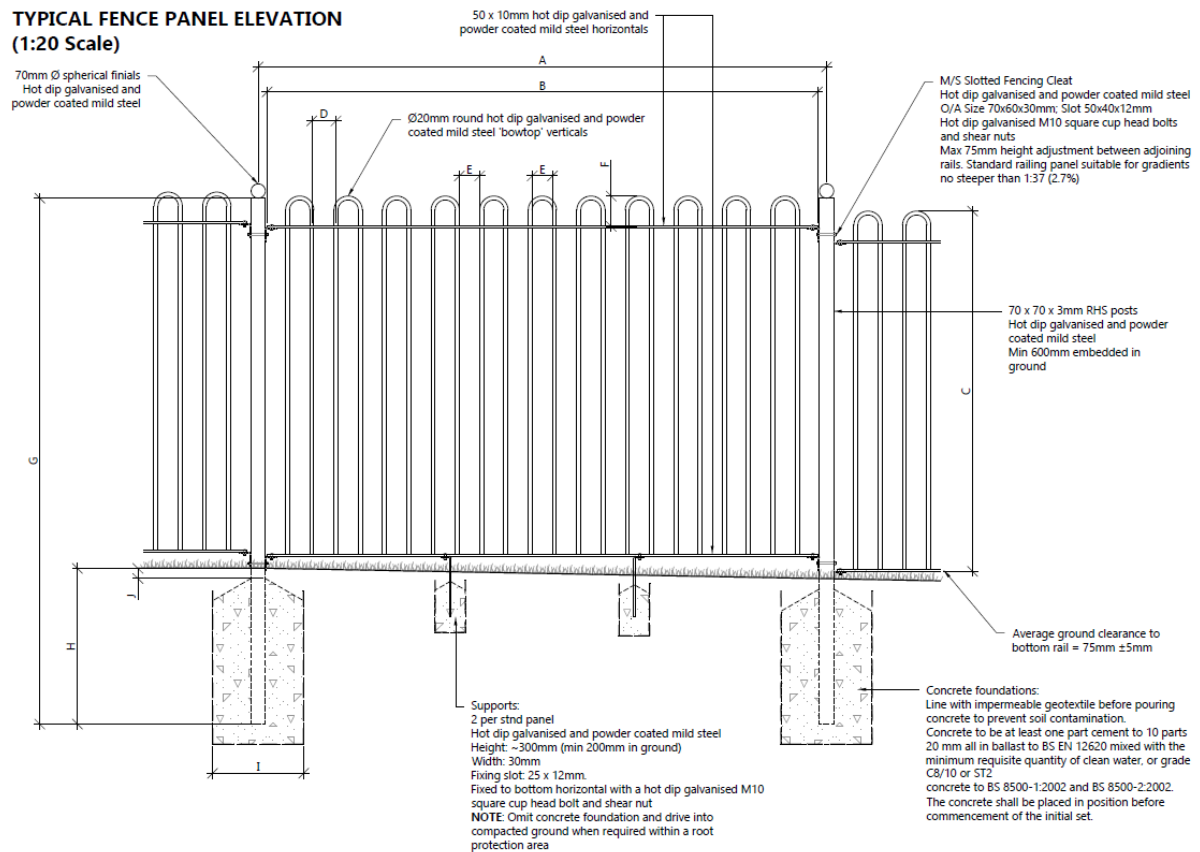
- 3.3 The proposed development comprises the replacement of the existing boundary fencing and gates with a unified bowtop metal railing system, including matching pedestrian and vehicular gates where required. The bowtop profile has been selected to provide a secure and durable boundary treatment while maintaining a visually open and lightweight appearance when viewed from both within and outside the campus.
- 3.4 The proposals respond directly to the shortcomings of the existing boundary treatment, which currently consists of a mix of degraded chain-link fencing, close-board timber fencing and isolated sections of vertical bar railings installed incrementally over time. This fragmented and dated arrangement results in an inconsistent and poorly legible campus edge, detracting from the appearance of the perimeter and its wider landscaped setting, and in places failing to provide a robust or clearly defined boundary.
- 3.5 By replacing these disparate elements with a consistent railing and gate system, the proposals introduce a coherent and recognisable campus edge that better reflects the quality and character of Whiteknights Campus. The design draws positively on the existing sections of vertical bar railings along Whiteknights Road, which represent the most successful and contextually appropriate boundary treatment currently in place, and extends this approach across the wider campus perimeter within Wokingham Borough.



Above: Photo of existing fence at Whiteknights Road. This is to be retained, and new fences shall visually match.

- 3.6 The open nature of the proposed railing improves visual permeability along the campus edge, allowing views through to retained trees, hedgerows and parkland planting while reinforcing a clear sense of boundary and access control. In doing so, the scheme enhances campus legibility and orientation, clearly distinguishing formal access points and reinforcing the identity of the University within its landscape context, while avoiding the introduction of visually defensive or intrusive boundary infrastructure.
- 3.7 All fencing, posts, gates and fixings are proposed to be hot-dip galvanised and powder-coated to provide a consistent appearance and long-term durability. The proposed colour finish is RAL 9005 (Jet Black), selected to match the retained existing bowtop railings along Whiteknights Road, reduce visual prominence and allow the boundary treatment to sit comfortably within the surrounding landscape.
- 3.8 Full details of the proposed fence and gate design are provided on Drawing 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-7000 (Typical Fence and Gate Details).

**TYPICAL FENCE PANEL ELEVATION
(1:20 Scale)**



Above: Extract from Drawing 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-7000 (Typical Fence and Gate Details) illustrating the typical replacement fence panel design.

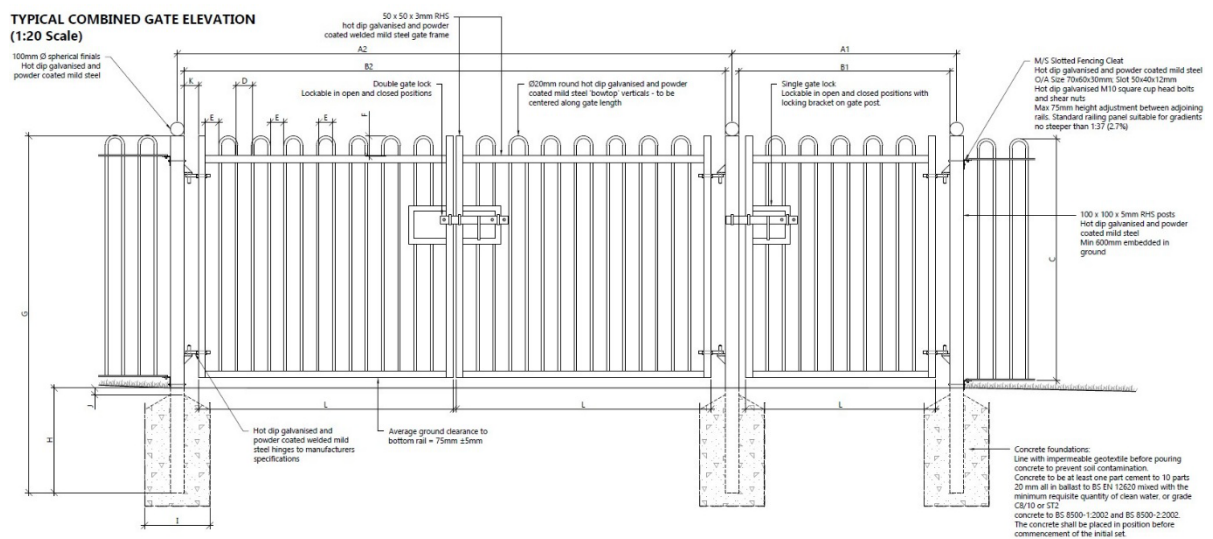
Use and Amount

- 3.9 The proposals relate solely to boundary treatment works. There is no change to the existing use of the site and no additional built floorspace is proposed.
- 3.10 The height of the fencing is approximately 1.8 metres, consistent with the scale of existing boundary treatments and appropriate to its function and context.
- 3.11 The total length of replacement fencing is approximately 1,822 linear metres, with five vehicular and pedestrian gates replaced at the perimeter of the campus.
- 3.12 The scale and extent of the fencing is consistent with existing boundary treatments and is appropriate to its security and townscape function.

Access

- 3.13 Existing access arrangements to and around the campus will be retained.

- 3.14 Pedestrian and vehicular gates are proposed where required, designed to match the appearance, materials and height of the adjacent fencing. Gate locations broadly replicate existing access points, ensuring continued permeability and operational access.
- 3.15 At the eastern end of Whiteknights Road, the existing modern gate will be removed and replaced as part of the wider programme of boundary upgrades. The immediate area is overgrown and access is already restricted, and appears to have been so for some time.



Above: Extract from Drawing 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-7000 (Typical Fence and Gate Details) illustrating the typical replacement fence gate design.

- 3.16 There are no proposed changes to public highway access or footway arrangements as a result of the development.

Environmental Considerations

Landscape

- 3.17 From a landscape and townscape perspective, the proposed replacement fencing represents a clear improvement over the existing boundary treatment, which is currently characterised by inconsistency in materials, appearance and condition. The removal of visually discordant and deteriorating fencing elements allows for the establishment of a more coherent and visually legible campus edge that better reflects the quality and sensitivity of its landscape setting.
- 3.18 The proposed bowtop metal railing provides a visually lightweight and permeable boundary treatment that remains subordinate to the surrounding landscape structure. Its open form ensures that existing

trees, hedgerows and parkland planting remain the dominant features when viewed from adjacent streets, footways and public routes, thereby maintaining the established character of the campus perimeter as a soft, vegetated edge rather than a defined built frontage.

- 3.19 By increasing the consistency of the boundary materials across the campus edge, the proposals enhance landscape coherence and reinforce a clear and recognisable identity for Whiteknights Campus within its wider context. The consistent treatment of gates and access points further improves legibility and orientation, clearly signalling points of entry while avoiding visual clutter or fragmentation along the perimeter.
- 3.20 The replacement fencing has been carefully designed to respond to existing vegetation and site-specific constraints. Detailed design and alignment have been informed by landscape and arboricultural considerations to minimise visual and physical impacts on retained trees and planting, ensuring compatibility with the surrounding green infrastructure.
- 3.21 Overall, the proposals conserve and reinforce local landscape character while delivering a more robust, visually appropriate and well-managed boundary treatment. In doing so, they accord with adopted policy objectives relating to landscape character, green infrastructure and high-quality, context-responsive design.

Arboriculture

- 3.22 A Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement (AIA/AMS) has been prepared by Challice Consulting Ltd in accordance with BS 5837:2012.
- 3.23 The AIA/AMS confirms that:
- The vast majority of existing trees will be retained;
 - The arboricultural impact of the proposals is minor;
 - Works within proximity to trees will be carried out by hand using agreed methodologies;
 - Appropriate tree protection and supervision measures will be implemented during construction.
- 3.24 The proposed fence alignment and construction methodology have been designed to minimise impacts on retained trees and root protection areas. Where trees are located on the boundary, a 'step back' fence detail will be installed to form a secure enclosure to the rear of the fence. A typical detail for this is included in submitted Drawing 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-7000 (Typical Fence and Gate Details).

Ecology

- 3.25 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment have been undertaken by Nicholas Pearson Associates Ltd. The fenceline runs along the boundary of woodland blocks, with The Wilderness woodland area forming part of Whiteknights Park Local Wildlife Site, as well as alongside non-native/ ornamental hedgerows, amenity grassland and amenity planting.
- 3.26 Where possible, construction access will be taken from open land/highway adjacent to the fence, though a strip of vegetation around 50cm will be cut back to allow access, with trees and large branches retained. A slightly larger area would be cut back where the new fence needs to be installed around retained trees or where offsite habitats prevent access from the highway. As trees, large branches and the canopy above the works will be retained it is anticipated that vegetation will recover quickly after fence installation, with removal of Cherry Laurel and shading from alongside the boundary fence providing a benefit to the retained woodland by allowing light to the woodland floor, though this is not significant enough to result in an uplift to the BNG score. A small area BNG uplift will be obtained by removing a stand of Cherry Laurel and replacing it with mixed native shrub at South Lodge; it is proposed to purchase further offsite units to achieve the 10% net gain.
- 3.27 Some sections of the existing fenceline are entwined with non-native Cherry Laurel hedges; these sections of non-native hedgerow will need to be removed to allow replacement of the fence. This is considered to be a benefit to the adjacent woodland, and a replacement section of species-rich native hedgerow will be planted to provide a >10% biodiversity net gain in the hedgerow component of the BNG assessment.
- 3.28 Bird boxes will be installed to mitigate for the temporary loss of nesting bird habitat and hedgehog houses are provided as an ecological enhancement. The existing fence was surveyed to check for mammal paths under it, with egress points for wildlife passage provided at the same locations as existing mammal paths, in addition the replacement fence is of a more wildlife friendly design than the old chain-link mesh fence.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The proposed replacement boundary fencing and gates at Whiteknights Campus, within Wokingham Borough Council, deliver a coordinated and contextually appropriate response to the existing condition of the campus perimeter. The proposals address the shortcomings of the current boundary treatment,

which is fragmented in appearance and, in places, deteriorated, by introducing a consistent, robust and well-designed fencing system that better reflects the quality of its landscape setting.

- 4.2 The scheme enhances the visual coherence and legibility of the campus edge, reinforcing a clear and recognisable boundary while maintaining visual permeability and ensuring that existing trees, hedgerows and parkland planting remain the dominant features within the streetscape. The replacement fencing improves orientation and access legibility by clearly defining formal entry points, while avoiding the introduction of visually defensive or intrusive boundary infrastructure.
- 4.3 The proposals have been informed by landscape, arboricultural and ecological considerations and have been designed to minimise impacts on retained vegetation and biodiversity assets. The open and lightweight nature of the bowtop railing ensures compatibility with the established 'University in a Park' character and safeguards the setting of nearby heritage assets, including the Local Historic Park and Garden and adjacent Listed Buildings.
- 4.4 Overall, the proposed development conserves and reinforces local landscape character, improves the appearance and functionality of the campus boundary, and delivers a high-quality, context-responsive solution consistent with adopted planning policy. On this basis, the proposals are considered acceptable in planning terms and suitable for approval.

NICHOLAS PEARSON ASSOCIATES

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | ECOLOGY | VISUALISATION

npaconsult.co.uk npavisuals.co.uk +44 (0)1225 876990

The Farm House, Church Farm Business Park, Corston, Bath BA2 9AP