

5<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Our Ref: 333103171

Wokingham Borough Council,  
Shute End,  
Wokingham,  
Berkshire,  
RG40 1BN

**BY PLANNING PORTAL: PP-14871361**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**WHITEKNIGHTS BOUNDARY FENCE, UNIVERSITY OF READING WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS  
FULL PLANNING APPLICATION**

On behalf of our client, the University of Reading, we are pleased to submit a planning application to Wokingham Borough Council ('WBC') for the replacement of existing boundary fencing and gates at the University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus, Reading.

The proposed description of development for which full planning permission is sought is as follows:

**"Removal and replacement of existing boundary fencing and gates"**

The following documents are submitted in support of the planning application:

- Completed Application Form
- CIL Form 1
- Planning Statement (May 2026)
- Heritage Statement (May 2026)
- Design and Access Statement (April 2026)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan (April 2026)
- Ecological Impact Assessment (May 2026)
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric (April 2026)
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology (April 2026)
- Site Location Plan (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 3001 P01)
- Site Plan WBC Overview Sheet (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 3010 P01)

- Site Plan WBC Sheet 1 (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 3011 P02)
- Site Plan WBC Sheet 2 (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 3012 P02)
- Site Plan WBC Sheet 3 (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 3013 P02)
- Site Plan WBC Sheet 4 (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 3014 P02)
- Site Plan WBC Sheet 5 (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 3015 P02)
- Site Plan WBC Sheet 6 (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 3016 P02)
- Site Plan WBC Sheet 7 (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 3017 P02)
- Typical Fence and Gate Details Elevation Plan (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 7000 P01)
- Proposed Planting Schedule and Management Notes Plan (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ SH L 5001 P01)

This application has been submitted electronically via Planning Portal (ref: PP-14871361).

A separate application is to be submitted to Reading Borough Council for similar boundary fencing works to Whiteknights Campus within its jurisdiction.

This Planning Statement provides an assessment of this proposal in consideration of national policy (i.e., the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF')) and the relevant policies of WBC's Development Plan to demonstrate that the proposed development is in accordance with local and national planning policy.

### **Site and Surrounding Area**

The University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus is set in 130 hectares of parkland, featuring a lake, open grassland spaces, woodlands and the Harris Gardens, in addition to its academic and student accommodation buildings. The Campus is located to the southeast of central Reading, bounded by Shinfield, Elmhurst, Upper Redlands, Whiteknights and Wilderness Roads and Pepper Lane. The southeastern part of the Campus is situated within Wokingham Borough and the northwestern part of the Campus is located within Reading Borough.

As shown on the submitted Site Location Plan (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 3001 P01), the Site comprises sections of the external boundary of Whiteknights Campus, which generally abut public highways and footways. These boundary sections are typically characterised by a combination of existing chain-link mesh fencing and close-board timber fencing, set alongside mature trees, hedgerows and grass verges.

In particular, along Whiteknights Road, Pepper Lane and at Earley Gate, the campus boundary fencing is visually integrated within a wider framework of planting. Public movement routes, including roads, footways and a public right of way run adjacent to and through this landscaped setting, with the boundary forming part of a broader parkland character.

As set out within the Design and Access Statement ('DAS'), the sections of boundary affected by the proposed fencing 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).

Whiteknights Campus contains a number of Listed Buildings, including 'The Lodge', 'North Lodge', 'South Lodge', 'Foxhill House', and 'Former Stables and Coach House', all of which are located in close proximity to the campus boundary.

In addition, a public right of way footpath (EARL6) passes through Whiteknights Campus and crosses the campus boundary at Earley Gate, between North Lodge and South Lodge.

The Campus is subject to a site-specific planning policy within the Wokingham Local Plan. The Site is not within an area of flood risk, and is not at risk of surface water and fluvial flooding. Part of the Campus is identified by WBC as a local historic park and garden known as 'Whiteknights Park'.

One 'Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation Zone' is identified within the site area; however, given the limited nature and scale of the proposed works, and the fact that the existing use of the Site will remain unchanged, there is no risk of exposure to contamination within the ground.

The Site lies within a mixture of red, amber and green Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones.

There is no relevant planning history to the application.

### **The Proposed Development**

Stantec has been instructed by the University of Reading to produce a detailed application for:

#### **"Removal and replacement of existing boundary fencing and gates"**

The University seeks to remove the existing boundary fencing and gates at sections of the external boundary of Whiteknights Campus and replace them with a new, high-quality metal fencing and gate system. The replacement fencing would broadly follow the alignment of the existing campus boundary, along sections of Redlands Road, Pepper Lane, Wilderness Road and Whiteknights Road, and no changes to land use are proposed.

The proposed development will provide a durable and high-quality replacement fencing system to improve the visual coherence and appearance of the campus edge while maintaining an appropriate level of security. It will reinforce the use of established main gateways for visitor access and orientation and ensure the fencing and gates respond sensitively to the surrounding landscape, trees and vegetation. The works would be carried out in a safe manner and in accordance with current arboricultural and ecological best practice.

The existing campus boundary fencing varies in condition, appearance and detailing, resulting in a boundary treatment that appears dated, visually inconsistent and lacking cohesion. 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.

In places, the fencing runs close to mature trees and established planting. The form, scale and materials of the proposed fencing and gates have been carefully considered to ensure a simple and functional design that integrates appropriately within the wider landscape and parkland setting of the campus.

As set out in the Design and Access Statement ('DAS'), prepared by Nicholas Pearson Associates, the replacement fencing comprises a bow-top metal railing system, with matching pedestrian and vehicular gates where required. The design approach has been informed by the established campus landscape character, defined by wooded edges, parkland planting and visually permeable boundaries. The proposed bow-top railing responds positively to this context by reinforcing the existing landscaped enclosure, rather than introducing a visually hard or overly defensive edge. All fencing, posts, gates and fixings will be hot dip galvanised and powder coated, providing a consistent finish and long-term durability. Further details

of the fencing and gates are provided in the accompanying 'Typical Fence & Gate Details' plan (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 7000 P01), prepared by Nicholas Pearson Associates.

### **Planning Policy Context**

This section sets out the national and local planning policy relevant to the planning application.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The adopted Development Plan for WBC comprises:

- Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (January 2010);
- Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (February 2014);
- Central and East Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2023);
- South East Plan Policy – NRM6 (Natural Resource management)

There is no made neighbourhood plan which includes the Campus.

### **The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was originally published on 27th March 2012, however, has since been subsequently updated in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024. It is a material consideration in determining planning applications and the chapters of the NPPF that are most of relevance in this instance include:

- **Chapter 4:** Decision-making
- **Chapter 8:** Promoting healthy and safe communities
- **Chapter 12:** Achieving well-designed places
- **Chapter 15:** Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- **Chapter 16:** Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Paragraph 39 of Chapter 4 (Decision-making) requires local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way, and should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Paragraph 48 states that planning law requires applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Chapter 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities) of the NPPF establishes the national planning policy framework for ensuring that development supports health, wellbeing, safety, social interaction, and community cohesion. It applies to both plan-making and decision-taking and is intended to ensure that development contributes positively to the social dimension of sustainable development. Paragraph 96 sets out the overarching principles that planning policies and decisions should achieve, including that development should be safe and accessible so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.

Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed and beautiful places) of the Framework is focused on achieving well-designed places which is a key aspect of sustainable development, creating better places in which to live and work. Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 135 emphasises that planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, are sympathetic to local character and history, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

Chapter 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) states at paragraph 187 that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, including minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Planning decisions should also recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Paragraph 187 emphasises that development should protect and enhance the natural environment, safeguard valued landscapes and biodiversity, and ensure that environmental impacts such as pollution are avoided or minimised. Paragraph 193 states that significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development must be adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for otherwise planning permission should be refused.

Chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) is focussed upon the protection and enhancement of heritage assets.

### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

The NPPG was first published in March 2014 and, alongside the Framework, provides guidance notes on various matters including design, natural environment, biodiversity net gain, and sports and recreation facilities.

### **National Design Guide**

The National Design Guide sets out the fundamental principles for good design and demonstrates what good design means in practice, covering ten characteristics including context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources, and lifespan.

### **Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy**

WBC's Core Strategy was adopted in January 2010 and sets out where development will occur within the borough to 2026 and includes a range of planning policies relating to housing, retail, employment and community facilities.

The planning policies contained in the Core Strategy that are most relevant to the proposed development are provided in full below.

**Policy CP1 (Sustainable development)** states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that meet certain criteria including those which: maintain and enhance the high-quality environment; ensure the provision of adequate drainage; provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; reduce the need to travel particularly by car and contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon developments.

**Policy CP2 (Inclusive Communities)** seeks to ensure that development contributes to sustainable, safe and inclusive communities and meets the long-term needs of all users.

**Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development)** - notes that planning permission will be granted for proposals that have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape or geological

features or water courses and maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species.

**Policy CP7 (Biodiversity)** sets out that sites designated as of importance for nature conservation at an international or national level will be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted. Development which may harm county designated sites, or which may harm habitats or species of principle importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna, or that compromises the implementation of the national, regional, county and local biodiversity action plans will be only permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance, that no alternative site that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need, and appropriate mitigation measures or compensation measures can be provided.

### **Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (MDD)**

Wokingham Borough's MDD Local Plan was adopted in February 2014 and supplements the policies within the Core Strategy. The planning policies that are most relevant to the proposed development are listed below.

**Policy CC01 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)** states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

**Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping)** notes that development proposals should; provide new or protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure networks; promote accessibility, linkages and permeability between existing green corridors including public right of way such as footpaths, cycleways and bridleways; promote the integration of the scheme with any adjoining public open space or countryside, protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features; and incorporate high quality, ideally, native planting and landscaping.

**Policy CC04 (Sustainable Design and Construction)** states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that seek to deliver high quality sustainably designed and constructed developments.

**Policy TB14 (Whiteknights Campus)** outlines the Whiteknights Campus as a focus for development. The complete policy is outlined in full below:

**“The University of Reading is a national and international educational establishment of strategic importance which will continue to adapt and expand over the plan period. The Whiteknights Campus as defined on the Policies Map will continue to be a focus for development associated with the University of Reading. Such development may include additional student, staff, teaching, research and enterprise accommodation, infrastructure and services, and sports and leisure facilities among other uses. There will also be improvements to access, including rationalisation of vehicle entrances and exits.**

**Development proposals will accord with the following criteria:**

- a) They respect the historic landscape, open areas and listed buildings and their settings and the character of the area;**
- b) Areas of wildlife significance (including Local Wildlife Sites) and current or potential green infrastructure networks will be retained and enhanced;**
- c) The safety of those using the campus (including highway safety issues and designing out crime) will be maintained and enhanced;**
- d) There are no significant detrimental impacts on neighbouring residential properties from the development, including from noise or parking; and**
- e) The loss of undeveloped areas on the site”**

**Policy TB21 (Landscape Character)** states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, and retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

**Policy TB23 (Biodiversity and Development)** states that planning permission for development proposals will only be granted where they comply with policy CP7 of the Core Strategy and demonstrate how they provide opportunities to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing features, provide appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites and important habitats or species, and ensure that all developments are ecologically permeable.

**Policy TB24 (Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas))** sets out the criteria against which development affecting such heritage assets will be assessed. It guides that works affecting heritage assets will be expected to conserve, and where possible enhance the special interest of the assets, including their setting.

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

WBC has several adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The relevant SPDs are set out below.

#### Borough Design Guide (June 2012)

The Borough Design Guide SPD was adopted in 2012 and brings together, updates, and extends previous guidance in line with the adopted Core Strategy to help deliver the vision and objectives of the Borough. Given the type of this application, many elements of the Guide are not relevant, but it does provide general guidance on how to achieve high quality design.

### **Emerging Local Plan**

WBC is currently preparing a new Local Plan, known as the Local Plan Update. This will include a vision, objectives, and strategy for the level and distribution of development in the borough up to 2040, including housing, economic and retail development, and new infrastructure.

The Local Plan Update was submitted for independent examination on 28 February 2025. Part 1 examination hearing sessions were held in November 2025, and WBC are in the process of holding Part 2 hearings, which commenced in March 2026. Therefore, the emerging Plan currently has limited weight when determining planning applications.

The WBC Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan contains draft policy SS9 (Whiteknights Campus) which relates to the Whiteknights Campus. This builds on the adopted TB14 policy, outlining WBC's aim to work proactively with the University and RBC to support the continued adaptation and development of the Whiteknights Campus. It also refers to the provision of new student accommodation on or nearby the Campus. Full draft policy SS9 is set out below:

**"1. The University of Reading is a national and international educational establishment of strategic importance, which will continue to adapt and expand over the plan period. The Whiteknights Campus as shown on the Policies Map will continue to be a focus for development associated with the University of Reading. Such development may include additional student, staff, teaching, research and enterprise accommodation, infrastructure and services, and sports and leisure facilities, among other uses. Access to and within the site will be improved where necessary.**

**2. Wokingham Borough Council will continue to work proactively with the University of Reading and Reading Borough Council to support the continued adaptation and development of the Whiteknights Campus as a focus for the University of Reading, to allow the university to continue to fulfil its important role in the economic success of the area.**

**3. Where development would result in a material need for additional students to be housed, it should be supported by an appropriate increase in existing or planned student accommodation. Provision of new student accommodation on the Whiteknights Campus, or as a reconfiguration or extension of nearby dedicated accommodation, will therefore be acceptable in principle where the need of student accommodation has been established, subject to other policies in the Local Plan Update.**

**4. Development proposals will accord with the following criteria:**

- a) Conserve, and where possible enhance, the historic parkland landscape, heritage assets and their settings;**
- b) The open areas and the character of the area are respected;**
- c) Areas of wildlife significance (including Local Wildlife Sites) and current or potential green and blue infrastructure networks are retained and enhanced, and will not be detrimentally affected by development, including through light effects;**
- d) The safety of those using the campus (including pedestrian and highway safety issues and designing out crime) will be maintained or enhanced;**
- e) No significant detrimental impacts on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties from the development, including from noise and parking; and**
- f) The loss of undeveloped areas on the site will be weighed against the benefits of development to the wider community.”**

### **Planning Assessment**

This section assesses the proposal against relevant national and local planning policy.

#### **Principle of Development**

Policy TB14 of the MDD sets out that the Whiteknights Campus will be a focus for development associated with the University of Reading including additional infrastructure and services and improvements to access. The removal and replacement of the existing boundary fencing and gates around parts of the University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus is considered acceptable in principle and aligns with the strategic objectives of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy and the MDD Local Plan. The proposal is limited in scale, would not result in any change to land use, built form or campus layout, and would broadly follow the alignment of the existing boundary treatment.

Policy TB14 further sets out that development on the Whiteknights Campus will accord with the following criteria:

- a) They respect the historic landscape, open areas and listed buildings and their settings and the character of the area;**
- b) Areas of wildlife significance (including Local Wildlife Sites) and current or potential green infrastructure networks will be retained and enhanced;**
- c) The safety of those using the campus (including highway safety issues and designing out crime) will be maintained and enhanced;**
- d) There are no significant detrimental impacts on neighbouring residential properties from the development, including from noise or parking; and**
- e) The loss of undeveloped areas on the site will be weighed against the benefits of development to the wider community.**

The proposal meets these criteria as follows:

- a) The proposals will be confined to the existing boundary of Whiteknights Campus and have been designed to be of an appropriate height, appearance and materiality, ensuring that it respects the open areas and setting of any nearby heritage assets. By sensitively responding to the campus edge and surrounding context, the proposal preserves local character and avoids harm to the significance of the heritage assets and to the local heritage interest of the non-designated Whiteknights Park historic park and garden.
- b) No areas of wildlife significance, including the Whiteknights Local Wildlife Site, or green infrastructure networks will be negatively impacted by the proposal. The works do not involve the removal of established vegetation beyond that immediately associated with the existing fence line. The proposals will respond sensitively to existing trees and landscape features, ensuring continued ecological connectivity and the retention of existing green infrastructure networks.
- c) The proposals will enhance safety of those using the Campus by clearly defining the site boundary and reinforcing well-established access points. This approach supports the principles of designing out crime through improved access control and site legibility and aligns with policy CP2 of the Core Strategy. The development will not give rise to any highway safety concerns.
- d) The proposed works will not result in any significant detrimental impacts on neighbouring residential properties. The replacement fencing and gates will not generate additional noise, traffic or parking demand, as the works do not alter the use of the site. Instead, the proposal will replace an existing unattractive and piecemeal boundary treatment with a cohesive and visually improved fence, enhancing the appearance of the boundary and contributing positively to the character of the surrounding edge.
- e) The proposal does not result in the loss of undeveloped land, as it relates solely to the replacement of existing boundary infrastructure within the established Campus envelope.

At a national level, the NPPF (December 2024) supports sustainable development that is well-designed, responds positively to its context, safeguards amenity, and conserves the natural and historic environment. The proposal accords with these objectives by replacing the existing boundary fencing with a cohesive, more durable fence that enhances the visual coherence of the campus edge while maintaining appropriate levels of safety and security.

As set out in draft policy SS9 of WBC's emerging Local Plan, Whiteknights Campus will continue to be a focus for development associated with the University of Reading and will continue to adapt and expand over the plan period. In this context, the provision of enhanced boundary infrastructure is both necessary and appropriate, supporting the long-term function of the Campus while providing a clear, cohesive and high-quality boundary treatment to the adjoining area.

The development proposal is therefore considered appropriate development within Whiteknights Campus in accordance with MDD policy TB14 and complies with Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3, which supports development that responds positively to its context and safeguards amenity. Overall, the principle of development relating to the replacement of the boundary fencing and gates on the Site is considered acceptable.

## **Design**

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that meet specific criteria, including those that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.

As set out in the submitted DAS, the existing boundary treatment is visually unattractive, dated, and lacks visual coherence, comprising a mix of different materials and styles. In several locations, existing chain-link mesh fencing is damaged or deteriorated. As a result, it detracts from the appearance of the campus edge and its wider setting, rather than presenting a neat, clearly defined or robust boundary.

The proposed replacement fencing and gates will comprise a high-quality bow-top metal railing system, selected to provide an appropriate level of security while maintaining a visually open and lightweight appearance. The design responds positively to the established campus landscape character, which is defined by wooded edges, parkland planting and visually permeable boundaries. By matching the form, height and finish of the retained contemporary bow-top railings along Whiteknights Road, the proposals introduce a consistent and coherent boundary treatment that reinforces the landscaped enclosure of the campus.

As detailed in the Proposed Elevation Plan (ref: 30303 NPA WK ZZ DR L 7000 P01), all fencing, posts, gates and fixings will be hot-dip galvanised and powder-coated in RAL 9005 (Jet Black), ensuring visual consistency, reduced prominence within the landscape, and long-term durability. The fencing height of approximately 1.8 metres and its overall extent are consistent with existing boundary treatments and are appropriate to the security and function of the Campus. Existing pedestrian and vehicular access arrangements will be largely retained, with five vehicular and pedestrian gates provided, designed to match the appearance and scale of the adjacent fencing.

The proposals are consistent with Chapter 12 of the NPPF (Achieving well-designed places), as it would improve visual coherence along the campus boundary and respond sensitively to its landscape setting. It also accords with Chapter 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities) by maintaining clear boundary definition and campus security without adversely affecting pedestrian movement, accessibility or public safety.

The proposed development also complies with MDD policy CC04, as the fencing and gates are appropriate in scale, materials and appearance, respond positively to their context, and preserve the character and amenity of the surrounding area, thereby delivering a high-quality design development. Additionally, the proposals align with MDD policy TB21, which requires development to retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape, a requirement met through the introduction of a coherent, visually permeable boundary that integrates with existing trees, vegetation and parkland character.

### **Arboriculture**

Policy CC03 of the MDD notes that development proposals should provide new or protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure networks, protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features and incorporate high quality, ideally, native planting and landscaping.

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment ('AIA') and Arboricultural Method Statement ('AMS') have been prepared by Challice Consulting Ltd in support of this application and have been carried out in compliance with British Standard 5837:2012. The report includes a Tree Protection Plan which sets out the surveyed trees and hedges around the Site and their Root Protection Areas (RPAs), as well as the tree protection measures required.

The assessment confirms that the proposed development provides for the retention and protection of all the trees surveyed, with the exception of small trees less than 100mm in diameter that are required to be removed to allow for the removal of the existing fence and the placement of the new fence. Minor tree pruning is recommended as a matter of good arboricultural practice in order to achieve appropriate clearance from the proposed fencing and will not impact the vitality or amenity value of the retained trees.

There will be no significant incursions into the RPAs of retained trees. The AMS sets out detailed measures to ensure tree protection throughout the construction phase, including:

- All removal of the existing fence to be undertaken by hand, with the soil structure retained below ground and all roots over 25mm in diameter protected.

- Excavation of foundations for the proposed fence posts to be carried out by hand, retaining all roots greater than 25mm in diameter.
- Lining of all post holes with heavy-duty polythene to prevent cement leaching into the soil and causing damage to tree roots.
- Installation of protective fencing and ground protection in accordance with the approved TPP to safeguard RPAs for the duration of the works.

Overall, the arboricultural impact of the proposals is considered to be minor, with tree loss limited to low-quality specimens and trees retained where appropriate. All works would be undertaken in accordance with recognised arboricultural best practice to avoid harm to retained trees and associated habitats. As such, the proposals will result in very little impact to the surrounding landscape. The development therefore accords with Policy CC03 of the MDD and paragraph 136 of the NPPF, which seeks the retention of trees wherever possible.

### **Biodiversity and Ecology**

Policy CP07 of the Core Strategy and policy TB23 of the MDD set out the policy requirements in relation to biodiversity, and the conservation and enhancement of habitats and species. Policy TB23 sets out that planning permission will only be granted where developments provide opportunities to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing features, provide appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites and habitats and species of principle importance for nature conservation, and ensure that they are ecologically permeable.

An Ecological Impact Assessment (May 2026), prepared by Nicholas Pearson Associates, is submitted as part of the planning application and assesses the ecological baseline, likely impacts, and appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures.

The Site is not subject to any ecological designations, and it is considered that the development will not affect any nearby designated sites. The proposed fence line lies adjacent to Whiteknights Park Local Wildlife Site at The Wilderness, along the eastern section of the Site. Habitats along the fence line are predominantly wooded, with areas of more managed habitat occurring at established entrances to the University campus.

The Ecological Impact Assessment identifies that habitats within and adjacent to the Site have the potential to support species including commuting and foraging bats, badgers, amphibians, nesting birds and other species. The Assessment sets out proportionate mitigation measures accordingly, and recommends additional ecological enhancements. These include the provision of hedgehog nest boxes and Schwegler bird boxes installed adjacent to the Site, contributing to biodiversity enhancement in accordance with policy TB23 of the MDD.

To minimise potential impacts during construction, access will be taken from open land or the adjacent highway wherever possible. A narrow strip of vegetation (approximately 50cm) will be cut back to allow access, with trees and large branches retained. Slightly wider clearance may be required in locations where fencing is installed around retained trees or where off-site habitats prevent access from the highway. As trees, large branches and the canopy above the works will be retained, it is expected that habitats will recover quickly following installation works.

The Site lies within a mixture of red, amber and green Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones. However, the only waterbodies within 100m of the proposed works are Whiteknights Lake and a small number of linear drains, which were largely dry and assessed as unsuitable for Great Crested Newt breeding at the time of survey (April 2026).

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric determines the proposals would result in an increase of 1.6% area habitat units and 16.0% hedgerow units. Given the level of impact of the works and relatively short timescales associated with delivering the project, the residual increase required to reach the 10% BNG threshold will be achieved through the purchase of offsite area habitat units.

Some sections of the existing fence line are intertwined with non-native Cherry Laurel hedging. These sections will require removal to facilitate the fence replacement; however, this is considered beneficial to the adjacent woodland. Replacement planting will comprise species-rich native hedgerows, contributing to the hedgerow net gain and further enhancing biodiversity outcomes.

Overall, the proposed development would not result in the loss, deterioration or harm to habitats or species of biodiversity importance. Appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed, and the scheme delivers measurable biodiversity net gain. The development therefore accords with policy CP07 of the Core Strategy, policy TB23 of the Managing Development Delivery plan, and Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Heritage and Archaeology**

There are no specific heritage policies within the adopted Core Strategy, however Policy CP3 provides the most relevant policy considerations in heritage terms guiding that development proposals should not have a detrimental impact on important heritage features within the Borough. Policy TB24 within the MDD sets out the criteria against which development affecting such heritage assets will be assessed.

The heritage assets that form part of Whiteknights Campus and have the potential to be impacted by the proposals through a change to their setting include 'The Lodge' (Grade II Listed), 'North Lodge' (Grade II Listed), 'South Lodge' (Grade II Listed), 'Foxhill House' (Grade II\* Listed), and the associated 'Former Stables and Coach House' (Grade II Listed). WBC have identified Whiteknights Park as a 'Local Historic Park and Garden' and it is considered a non-designated heritage asset of low (local) heritage interest.

In accordance with the statutory tests set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the proposals preserve the significance of the nearby listed buildings for current and future generations.

In line with Chapter 16 of the NPPF, the proposals have been designed to take account of the significance of heritage assets and their settings. As set out in the submitted Heritage Statement prepared by Stantec (May 2026), the proposals would not result in any direct impact on built heritage located within Whiteknights Campus. Any indirect impact to the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings would be minimal and would not harm their significance. Existing access points would be maintained, preserving historic spatial relationships and circulation patterns associated with the buildings and Campus, and the proposals would not alter the principal relationships, legibility or appreciation of the assets within their immediate surroundings, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 208, which seeks to avoid conflict between heritage conservation and development.

The replacement fencing and gates would be of a modest height and lightweight appearance, and would not be visually dominant in key views or compete with the heritage assets. As part of the proposals, changes are intended to the gates adjacent to The Lodge and the gated entrance north of Foxhill House. The existing gates are not considered to be of special architectural or historic interest and do not contribute meaningfully to the significance of the buildings; their replacement would not involve the loss of historic fabric. The proposals would introduce a more coherent and consistent boundary treatment, reducing visual clutter and reinforcing a clear sense of place, without detracting from the character of the area. In doing so, the proposals accord with policy TB14 of the MDD, which seeks to ensure that the setting of built heritage assets and the historic landscape is respected.

The proposals would have a minimal localised direct impact on the non-designated Whiteknights Park historic park and garden, limited to the peripheries of Whiteknights campus, and is not considered to

result in harm to the local heritage interest of this place. These works would not result in the loss of any surviving features of the former parkland or elements which positively contribute, and would not alter the layout or character. The design is in keeping with the current educational function, use and character of this former parkland, and the historic estate boundary is retained.

The development therefore sustains the significance and positive contribution of heritage assets, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 210. For the same reasons, the proposals are consistent with relevant local planning policy, including policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and policy TB24 of the MDD, which seek to ensure the protection of heritage significance and high-quality design that responds positively to context.

Overall, the proposals are considered to preserve the significance of both designated and non-designated heritage assets, result in no harm to the historic environment, and fully accord with national and local planning policy.

Given that the proposed works are localised, limited in extent, and confined to areas of previous disturbance, a separate archaeological assessment is not considered proportionate or necessary. Archaeology is therefore not considered a constraint to the applications.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application at the University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus, Reading for:

#### **“Removal and replacement of existing boundary fencing and gates”**

The proposed development seeks to remove and provide replacement of the existing boundary fencing and gates along sections of the external boundary of Whiteknights Campus. The new fencing would broadly follow the established boundary alignment and would not result in any change to land use.

The development would deliver a high-quality, cohesive and durable boundary treatment, replacing an existing visually inconsistent and dated boundary arrangement. The proposed bow-top metal fencing and gates have been carefully designed to integrate sensitively with the Campus' landscape and parkland setting, while maintaining appropriate security and reinforcing established access points. All works would be undertaken in accordance with arboricultural and ecological best practice, ensuring the protection of retained trees and vegetation.

Overall, the replacement of the existing boundary fencing and gates represents a sustainable and policy-compliant form of development which would enhance the appearance, coherence and function of the campus boundary without giving rise to adverse impacts.

We trust that the submission is in order and that the planning application can be validated promptly. However, should you have any queries in relation to any of the enclosed, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01189 520337 or by email – [ilaria.sutton@stantec.com](mailto:ilaria.sutton@stantec.com).

Yours sincerely,



**Ilaria Sutton**  
**Planner**  
**Stantec UK Limited**