

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251414
Site Address:	University Of Reading, J J Thomson Building, Shinfield Road, Reading, Reading, RG6 6ED
Expiry Date:	11 August 2025
Site Visit Date:	19 June 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed installation of Standby Generator to serve HLS, Maths and DTS at University of Reading to include concrete slab base and fenced enclosure, adjacent to the electricity substation to the rear of the J J Thomson Building.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Borough Parishes
Core Employment Areas
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Local Historic Parks and Gardens
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone Minor

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB14- Whiteknights Campus TB21 – Landscape Character

	TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
042123	Proposed installation of new fan coil units for comfort cooling to laboratories.	Approve 29/09/2004
131687	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed shared use pedestrian/cyclist area, bicycle docking station with 20no docking points and erection of information board.	Approve 21/10/2013
130354	Proposed alterations to interior of first floor of existing building to reconfigure laboratory space, plus addition of rooftop plant.	Approved 05/11/2013
142712	Proposed installation of 6no louvred grills to accommodate a new mechanical and heating ventilation system and a new downpipe.	Approve 23/09/2014
152550	Full application for replacement windows for building W003 JJ Thomson Building.	Approve 18/11/2015
161693	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed insertion of 5no new windows with integrated louvers and the removal of existing sliding door	Approve 16/08/2016
161614	Full application for the proposed erection of a substation, materials store and service diversions.	Approve 22/08/2016
163315	Full application for the erection of a 5 storey Health and Lifesciences Building; new entrance and external works to Philip Lyle Building; associated landscaping and car parking; following demolition of the Engineering and Harborne Building within the Whiteknights Campus of the University of Reading	Approve 20/03/2017
180166	Full application for the proposed erection of two x 2.1m high cedar hit and miss fence enclosing two air handling units adjacent to the building plus associated paving and landscaping works.	Approve 09/04/2018
182832	Full application for the proposed renewal of existing roof finish from existing copper long strip roofing to Euroclad Vieo colour coated long strip roofing.	Approve 11/01/2019
182343	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed installation of pipes (4no 120mm	Approve

	diameter insulated pipework with black thermoplastic lagging) to the western elevation of the existing building, continuing up and over the parapet, to connect to the external air handling units on the roof.	06/02/2019
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CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Landscape and Trees: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Built Heritage Officer: No objection

WBC Ecology Newts: No comments

External

Berkshire Gardens Trust: No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Earley Town Council: No objection
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description: The JJ Thomson Building is an 11m high building located on the southern side of the Whiteknights Campus of the University of Reading. It houses two lecture theatres with mechanical equipment on the roof and is surrounded by similar sized buildings.

The site area is not visible from the public highway. The area to the southwest of the site is screened by trees.

Principle of Development: The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is located within settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

Policy TB14 specifically relates to development at the Whiteknights Campus supporting its sustainable growth subject to certain criteria. 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. Development at the Campus must 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 proposed development adheres to these criteria which are assessed further below.

Character of the Area: The installation of a new standby generator to be installed adjacent to the electricity substation to the rear of the J J Thomson Building on the University of Reading Whiteknights campus. The generator is to provide back-up power supplies to essential service in the Health and Life Sciences (HLS), Maths and DTS buildings. The proposal is to supply install a package generator set along with oil tank and switch gear housing in an enclosure.

The proposed location for the generator is within the service area with rubbish bins, external chiller units and gas bottles to the rear of J J Thomson.

The Standby Generator substation would adjoin onto an existing substation and would be of a similar size and utilise similar materials. The enclosure will be a timber fencing 1.8m high to be vertical hit and miss hardwood (white oak) boards, 100 x 25mm cross-section, staggered in plan and set either side of concrete posts set in concrete and with timber rails. This is the same as the hit and miss cladding to the exterior of the existing substation.

The proposed fencing would screen the majority of the proposal at ground level but will be visible from the upper floors of surrounding buildings. Even then, it is reasonable in the context of the surrounding area and no objection raised. The substation will sit amongst the backdrop of the of J J Thomson building, it will not adversely detract from the character of the building or the wider area.

Also, the areas is softened by an existing tree and as part of the works additional trees will be planted at the entrance to the service area further screening it from 2nd

Avenue.

Overall, the development would have a minimal impact upon the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity: Given the nature of the scheme and application site within the Reading university campus, no concerns with regards to overlooking, overbearing or loss of light.

Built Heritage: From a heritage perspective, whilst Whiteknights Park has been recognised by the Council as being a Local Historic and Garden the proposals is however considered, given its location and surroundings, will have no undue impact on the non-designated heritage asset.

Landscape and Trees: An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement by Challice Consulting Ltd and dated 5th June 2025 accompanies the application and indicates the Norway maple tree adjacent to the location of the proposed standby generator can be adequately protected during the works. An arboricultural condition will need to be included to ensure compliance with this document.

A Landscape Plan (XXXXXXX-TVS-XX-XX-DR-B-XXXX-18201 Rev B) is provided showing the location of new planting which is acceptable. The officer has suggested a condition relating to the provision of new planting which is included in the decision notice.

Overall, there are no tree or landscape objections to this application.

Environmental Health: The proposal is for the installation of a Standby Generator to serve HLS, Maths and DTS at University of Reading to include concrete slab base and fenced enclosure, adjacent to the electricity substation to the rear of the J J Thomson Building.

The Environmental Protection Team have reviewed the noise assessment prepared by CPW, Reference: 230255 UoR Standby Generator (Substation W263). Noise Monitoring was undertaken between the 24th March 2025 and 25th March 2025 to determine the background noise levels and the mitigation measures, if required.

The Noise assessment concluded the proposed standby generator levels were below the background noise levels and will not affect the nearby residents.

However, to protect the residents in close proximity the Environmental Protection Team would recommend a control of plant/ machinery noise condition, which has been included in the decision notice.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

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 persons with protected characteristics as 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 as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION	
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Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	11 August 2025
Earliest date for decision:	7 July 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	11 August 2025