

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242533
Site Address:	Unit 1, 125 Reading Road, Wokingham, RG41 1HD
Expiry Date:	10 December 2024
Site Visit Date:	09/01/2024 – See 232988
Proposal: Full application for the erection of two storey front extension to provide additional retail floor space.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
- Scale and Location of Development Proposals
- Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
- Landscape Character Assessment Area
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones
- Green Routes and Riverside Paths Consultation Zone
- Flood Zones 2 and 3
- Flood Zone 3

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 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP15 – Employment Development
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 CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

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PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
200987	Full planning application for the proposed change of use from A1 (Retail) to B2 (General Industrial) for the use as a motorcycle repairs and MOT facility.	Approval, 22/06/2020
193282	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed use of building for motorcycle repairs and MOT facility.	Refused, 23/03/2020
232988	Full application for the proposed erection of a two-storey front extension to provide retail space.	Refused 25/01/2024
240383	Full application for the proposed erection of a two storey front extension to provide retail space.	Refused, 05/04/2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No objections, subject to a condition.
WBC Drainage – Further information requested.
WBC Highways – Objects to proposed development.
WBC Growth & Delivery (Planning Policy) – No comments received.
WBC Economic Prosperity & Place (Community Infrastructure) – No comments received.
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections, subject to a condition.
WBC CIL - This development will be liable for CIL
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received.
WBC Ecology – No comments received.

External

SSE Power Distribution – No comments received.
Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No objections.
South East Water – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	Reading Road, RG41 1HD - Ride worx had a event the weekend, loads of bikes everywhere. Im Worried about parking. Where are staff going to park with only 1 or 2 spaces available? The parking they have now is not enough for the vehicles that use it now. There's only a few spaces

	<i>on reading road and can see it being used for none shop customers or none residents.</i>
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APPRAISAL
Site Description and Proposed Development: The application site relates to a motorcycle retail unit which currently fronts onto the northern side of Reading Road. This application follows two previous schemes submitted under references 232988 and 240383 in January 2024 and April 2024, respectively. Both applications were broadly refused on the grounds that the proposed front extension would have constituted a prominent and incongruous addition, adversely impacting the character of the area. A pre-application (ref 241109) was submitted in May 2024 to seek advice on the current scheme, which proposes a two-storey front extension to provide additional retail floor space. 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. As the site is within a major development location and the proposal involves an extension to the existing Class E use, the proposal is acceptable in principle. This includes a consideration of its sustainability credentials as it is located approximately 20 metres from the nearest bus stop. The site is not classified as being part of a defined employment area in the local plan proposals map, however, it is located in an industrial estate of commercial units. Policy CP15 of the Core Strategy allows for the redevelopment, refurbishment or minor extension of buildings in employment use where they are in the settlement limits and where there is no net loss of Class B floor space. The proposal includes a net increase of approximately 235 m2 of Class E (a) floorspace and would not result in a loss of any floorspace in B Use. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CP15 in terms of providing additional employment floorspace within the Borough. Character of the Area: Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high-quality design. Policy NR1 of the Borough Design Guide states development should respond to key characteristics and features of the site. This is reinforced in the Borough Design Guide SPD, in terms of NR2, which states that proposals should improve the area and NR7, which requires that roofs be

designed to the context of the area, as well as NR5, NR6, NR8 and NR9.

Reading Road is a long diverse street which contains a variety of building ages, heights, architecture and uses. The application site comprises part of a retail unit which is located on the northern side of Reading Road. The immediate surrounding area consists of small commercial units; this includes Kwik Fit and a car dealership (Wokingham Trade Centre) on adjacent sides to the subject site and several other similar motor-related businesses towards the rear of the site.

The proposal seeks to introduce a flat roofed staggered extension, the longest portion would project approximately 13.6 metres from the original stepped front elevation of the existing building.

The utilitarian commercial units in the immediate surrounding area are single storey in height, are set back from the main road and feature modest roof slopes (such as flat and pitched roof forms) therefore do not appear unduly prominent when viewed from the street scene. The proposed extension would have a maximum height of approximately 6.3 metres, extending slightly above the adjacent buildings. Whilst the height difference would be apparent on approaches along Reading Road, it would not be to an extent that would appear incongruous within the immediate area. The extension would be set considerably back from the main highway and the use of a flat roof design would assist in reducing the perceived scale of the development.

The submitted plans show that the build materials and finishes would match the existing material palette across the building. Furthermore, the quantity, scale, and position of the proposed glazed openings across the building elevations would be acceptable and help visual relief from the cladding covering the bulk of the building envelope.

Overall, it is considered that the scale and design of the proposed extension would be appropriate and reflective of a commercial/retail development located in a suburban area, therefore, the scheme would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity and R23 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that extensions relate to neighbouring properties.

R15 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires the retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms, with separation of 22-30m to the rear and 10-15m to the street. R23 notes that the side walls must not contain windows, especially at first floor level.

Overbearing and Sense of Enclosure: R16 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires separation distances of 1.0m to the side boundary and 11m to the rear boundary.

In terms of overlooking, overbearing and loss of light impacts, the proposals is suitably located well away from any neighbouring residential amenities as to not to

pose any unreasonable concerns to any neighbouring properties.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street parking standards, including provision for charging facilities.

The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal for increased retail floor space, including a café, which reduces car parking spaces from 5 to 4 and motorcycle spaces from 4 to 3. Satellite imagery shows current usage far exceeds these provisions, with overspill likely to obstruct visibility splays, traffic flow, and public safety. The Highways Officer considers that the site and floor plans indicate parking in front of the shop would obstruct access, making it impractical. Proposed informal agreements for additional parking on adjacent land are not enforceable, and visitors are unlikely to use rear parking, worsening overspill at the front.

Given these concerns, the Highways Officer cannot support the proposal.

The application site is situated in a sustainable location with access to various transport modes. A bus stop, providing routes through Wokingham and Bracknell, is located directly opposite the site. Additionally, a designated cycle lane runs along a significant stretch of Reading Road, including the frontage of the site. As such, the availability of these alternative transport options is expected to reduce dependency on private vehicles for accessing the site. Furthermore, given that the subject unit specialises in the sale of motorbikes and associated equipment, it is reasonable to assume that a significant proportion of visitors will arrive on motorbikes. Consequently, the proposed provision and size of bike parking spaces, which are broadly equivalent to the car parking allocation, are considered appropriate and reflective of the customer base.

As outlined above, the immediate surrounding area comprises small commercial units and several motor-related businesses. Due to the absence of marked parking bays, parking arrangements between businesses are generally informal, often allowing for parking elsewhere within the site when spaces at individual businesses are unavailable. Aerial imagery indicates that this type of informal parking arrangement has been well established and functional since at least 1999.

Although not included within the submitted red line boundary or under the applicant's ownership, a strip of land to the immediate northwest of the site currently accommodates up to seven vehicles. This space could serve as overflow parking for customers' motorbikes or cars if the on-site parking provision, as shown on the submitted site plan, is at capacity. The highways Officer notes that current usage far exceeds these provisions leading to overspill which is likely to obstruct visibility splays. It should be noted that many of the vehicles currently utilising the existing parking arrangement are not directly associated with the subject business but are instead linked to other smaller businesses in the immediate area. The proposed parking arrangement, which reallocates a portion of the existing spaces to create a designated area for delivery vehicles associated with the subject site only, would help address this issue by reducing overspill and improving parking efficiency. In any case, even if the designated delivery space is occasionally occupied or used for parking, this is unlikely to obstruct visibility splays. The site benefits from a wide crossover,

which ensures clear views of both the pavement and the highway when exiting the premises.

The Highways Officer has raised concerns that the proposed parking arrangement in front of the shop could obstruct access, making it impractical. However, the submitted site plan demonstrates that the immediate entrance to the building is delineated as a footpath and protected with bollards, ensuring unobstructed pedestrian access.

Finally, amended plans, received on 2 December 2024, omit the proposed café and replace it with additional retail floor space. This revision reduces the longer duration of use typically associated with cafés and consequently lowers the overall parking demand.

Based on the above, it is considered that the site provides sufficient parking space to minimise the likelihood of roadside parking, thereby safeguarding highway safety and convenience. Consequently, the scheme is deemed acceptable in terms of highway considerations.

Flooding and Drainage:

The majority of Unit 1 is within flood zone 1 and just north-east corner of the building (Rear) is within flood zone 2.

The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed the Lanmor Consulting Flood Risk Assessment report (241869/FRA/AG/KBL/01, dated 01/10/2024) and notes the following:

- The site is currently 100% impermeable, with the development proposing attenuation via a 400mm subbase beneath permeable paving, discharging at a controlled rate of 0.8l/s into a Thames Water sewer.
- Thames Water has confirmed no objections to the connection (letter 77967, dated 17/10/2024).
- Micro-drainage calculations (dated 01/10/2024) indicate that 11.4m³ of attenuation is required to manage runoff for events up to the 1 in 100-year flood event, including a 40% allowance for climate change.

The proposed drainage strategy drawing (241869/DS/01, Appendix B) reflects the strategy but does not indicate the size of the permeable paving area to confirm it can accommodate the required 11.4m³. The officer has therefore requested a revised drawing demonstrating that the permeable paving area is sufficient to meet the attenuation requirements.

An amended drainage strategy drawing, submitted on 11/12/2024, indicates that the proposal includes a permeable paving area of approximately 130m². The Council's Drainage Officer considers this sufficient to accommodate the required 11.4m³ of attenuation. Accordingly, no objections are raised.

Landscape and Trees:

Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.

There are no trees or vegetation within or around the application site that would be affected by the proposed development and as such, no significant impact would be anticipated in this respect.

The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed this application and notes that the site is located adjacent to a Green Route. Consequently, as part of any application to increase the size of the building, it is important that improvements in the form of soft landscaping are made to the site along the front boundary and possibly the south-east side boundary, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CP1 and Local Plan Policy CC03. A suitable condition will be attached to any approval.

Environmental Health:

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has reviewed the application and raised no objections to the proposed development, subject to a condition controlling noise during the construction period. This measure is intended to protect nearby occupants, including residents in flats above shops near the application site. A suitable condition will be attached to any approval granted.

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**Conditions agreed:**

Yes

Recommendation:

Approval

Date:

9 December 2024

Earliest date for decision:

6 November 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	13.12.2024