

11th March 2025

Wokingham Borough Council
Planning Department
Submitted via the Planning Portal

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Dear Sir/Madam.

Full planning for the erection of a boundary fence and gate at Wokingham Fire Station, 13 Easthampstead Road, Wokingham RG40 2EH.

The following letter has been prepared by Ridge and Partners LLP on behalf of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, in support of a full planning application for the erection of a boundary fence and gate at Wokingham Fire Station.

This application should be read in conjunction with the following supporting documentation:

- Completed planning application Forms;
- 5027809-XX-ST-PL-A-0101_B Site Proposals; and
- 5027809-XX-ST-PL-A-0100 Location Plan.

Description of the Site and Surrounding Area

Wokingham Fire Station is located in the town centre of Wokingham. The Site comprises a Fire station, office/training building, and a parking area with manoeuvring space.

The rear of the site which contains the parking area for staff is accessed via Denton Road which is a predominantly residential area. South east of the site lies the East Hampstead Public car park. Immediately north of the site is a mix of residential and commercial buildings.

Designations

The application site is located within the Wokingham Town Centre as identified within the Wokingham Core Strategy. Additionally, a public footpath runs close to the site, just beyond its eastern boundary (footpath reference: WOK118).

According to the environment agency's map, the site lies within Flood Zone level 1.

Planning History

The site has a recent planning history, which is outlined below.

In October 2022, a Lawful Development Certificate application was approved for a proposed change to fenestration at the Southeast Elevation (Application reference: 222486).

In March 2010, planning permission was approved to extend the existing fire station with new access onto Easthampstead Road. This application included the demolition of properties number 11 and 13 (Application reference: 090920).

The Proposal

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a fence and gate on the site's western and southern boundary, bordering Denton Road and the adjacent car park. This fence and gate will define the site's western boundary, separating the site's car park and buildings from Denton Road and the pavement running adjacent to it. The purpose of this fence and gate is to ensure that all employees gain access to the parking spaces and discourage members of the public from using the space for parking instead of the adjacent car park. Additionally, it will also ensure that the Fire station car park is protected from a security perspective, which will discourage burglaries and damage to the building.

Additionally, a compound unit with fencing is proposed to the north-west corner of the site.

The proposed new mesh fencing and gate, 2.1 metres high in a green colour. The gate would be access controlled with staff having sufficient space to wait off the road whilst the gates are opening.

Access will remain the same as existing and no other changes to the site are proposed.

Relevant Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The adopted Development Plan policy context for the site and the surrounding area is provided by the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy ('CS'; adopted January 2010) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan ('MDD'; adopted February 2014).

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy

Wokingham Borough's Core Strategy was adopted in January 2010 which sets out where development will occur within the borough to 2026, taking account of the health, wellbeing and quality of life of the borough's residents.

Policy CP1 states that planning permission will be granted for sustainable development. This includes development proposals that: maintain and enhance the high-quality environment; limit any adverse effects on water quality; ensure the provision of adequate drainage; provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; and reduce the need to travel particularly by car.

Policy CP3 focuses on the General principles of development and has several criteria. Criterion A of the policy outlines that all proposals should be appropriate in 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.

Policy CP6 states that planning permission will be granted for schemes that:

- a) Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice;
- b) Are located where there are or will be at the time of development choices in the mode of transport available and which minimise the distance people need to travel;
- c) Improve the existing infrastructure network, including road, rail and public transport, enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, including provision for those with reduced mobility, and other users;
- d) Provide appropriate vehicular parking, having regard to car ownership;
- e) Mitigate any adverse effects upon the local and strategic transport network that arise from the development proposed;
- f) Enhance Road Safety; and
- g) Do not cause highway problem or lead to traffic related environmental problems.

Policy CP9 outlines that the scale of development proposals in Wokingham borough must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location, together with their accessibility.

Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery DPD

Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery (MDD DPD) was adopted in February 2014 and adds extra detail to the policies within the Core Strategy.

The document begins by setting out ten cross cutting policies. The first of these policies is **policy CC01** (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) which 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 CC07 states that Planning permission will only be granted where the proposal demonstrates the following:

- a) How the proposed parking provision meets the standards set out in Appendix 2 of the MDD ;
- b) That the new scheme retains an appropriate overall level of off-street parking.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The NPPF was revised and updated in December 2024. It sets out the Government's Planning Policies for England and how they are expected to be applied.

Paragraph 85 notes that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

Chapter 12 looks to achieve well-designed and beautiful places. **Paragraph 135**, part f explains that planning decisions should ensure developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

Paragraph 116 states development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Planning Assessment

Design

One key matter in the determination of this application is the impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area. In this case, the fence will be constructed of green mesh which will still allow for views into the site from Denton Road.

The proposals will ensure that the Fire Station can be made secure and that the parking spaces are only used by members of staff and visitors to the site. At the present time, members of the public often use the car park to access the town centre meaning there is insufficient space on site for staff. Equally, the fence will provide additional security for the Fire Station. The proposed compound will be used for two vehicles.

The design of the gate and fence is appropriate. It is functional, simple and in keeping with the surroundings. Mesh Fencing is regularly used to define the boundary of commercial premises. The proposed development is, therefore, appropriate when considering the site's context. Most importantly, the design of the fence would make accessing

the site more difficult, discouraging people from trespassing. This will, in turn, enhance the safety of the site. The proposal, therefore, accords with Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

Access

Core Strategy Policy CP6 indicates that proposals should allow for transport choice, improve infrastructure, provide appropriate parking, mitigate adverse effects, enhance road safety and not cause highway problems. CC07 of the MDD Local Plan contains the Borough parking Standards. The NPPF advises at paragraph 116 that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

In this case, the entrance to the site would be setback from the road, allowing vehicles to wait off the highway whilst the gates open. Equally appropriate visibility splays will be provided to ensure that vehicles can safely exit the site. Therefore the proposals would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety

Due to the installation of the fence, gate and compound, a small number of spaces will become slightly restricted but will be sufficient for use. Most importantly, adequate parking will remain on site for staff and visitors. The proposal will ensure that staff members have access to the parking spaces and are not forced onto the road.

The proposed development therefore accords with CP6 of the core strategy and Policies CC07 of the MDD DPD, by creating a safe and accessible environment and is also consistent with paragraphs 113 and 116 of the Framework

Biodiversity

Whilst Biodiversity Net Gain is a mandatory requirement, the development does not impact any on-site habitat and is on existing hardstanding and it therefore falls within the exemptions.

Neighbouring Amenity

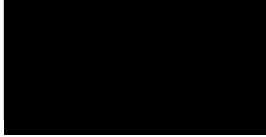
Due to the nature of the proposal, there are no overlooking or loss of light concerns. Overall, the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers in accordance with Core Strategy policy CP3.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed erection of a fence, gate and compound is necessary to ensure the security of the Fire Station. A fence and gate of this nature will be in keeping with its surroundings.

I trust this is sufficient to register the application. However, if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on the number at the head of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Jack Bradley
Senior Planner
For Ridge and Partners LLP

Enclosure