

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260556
Site Address:	424-426 Reading Road, Winnersh, RG41 5EP
Expiry Date:	17 July 2026
Site Visit Date:	18 March 2026
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a three storey mixed use building comprising 6 no. flats and 2 no. ground floor commercial units (a restaurant and a takeaway) with associated parking and landscaping, following demolition of the existing building.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

Major Development Location
Green Route
Heathrow Aerodrome Consultation Zone
Red Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts
District Town and Local Centres
Primary and Secondary Shop Frontages

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 CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP13 – Town Centres and Shopping
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits 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 TB05 – Housing Mix TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB15 – Major Town, and Small Town/District Centre development TB17 – Local Centres and Neighbourhood and Village Shops TB20 – Service Arrangements and Deliveries for Employment and Retail

	Use TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements SS10 – Meeting our housing needs CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE3 – Environmental standards for residential development CE6 – Reducing energy consumption in existing buildings CE7 – Low carbon and renewable energy generation C1 – Active and sustainable transport and accessibility C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design C3 – Active travel C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging ER2 – Employment uses outside of Core Employment Areas ER5 – The hierarchy of centres ER6 – Town, district and local centres and shopping parades H1 – Housing mix, density and standards H3 – Affordable housing FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE2 – Biodiversity net gain NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity DH3 – Shopfronts HC5 – Environmental protection HC6 – Air pollution and air quality HC7 – Light pollution HC8 – Noise pollution HC9 – Contaminated land and water HC10 – Odor, fumes and dust
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

424 Reading Road

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
R/33/66	Use of shop for sale of fish.	Refused – 22/12/1966
R/72/70	Change of use of part of dwellinghouse as shop	Refused –

	and store.	19/03/1970	
18996	Use of office to DIY shop and rest forming residential.	Refused 31/03/1983	
19024	External fascia sign.	Refused 31/03/1983	–
19023	Change of use from shop to restaurant, rear extension and new shopfront.	Refused 31/03/1983	–
22328	Electrical supplies and repairs.	Refused 18/10/1984	–
38172	Change of use of part of ground floor to shop.	Refused 11/10/1991	–
42124	Part ground floor change of use from residential to A1 shop use.	Approved 01/08/1994	–
43477	Change of use to Indian takeaway	Approved 01/03/1995	–
43480	Erection of illuminated shop fascia sign.	Approved 01/03/1995	–
VAR/1996/6377 8	Proposed Variation To Condition 5 on Approval 43477 To Allow Sunday Opening.	Approved 27/06/1996	–
F/1997/65580	Proposed Single Storey Rear Extension To Takeaway Shop And Change Of Use Of Part To Form Restaurant	Refused 17/07/1997	–
426 Reading Road			
1736/73	Internal alterations to shop and extension of living accommodation.	Refused 26/10/1973	–
00127	Alterations to shop and living accommodation.	Approved 14/02/1974	–
14889	Extension of garage and new canopy for business use in connection with shop.	Approved 26/02/1981	–
28800	Side extensions and internal alterations.	Approved 26/11/1987	–
38172	Change of use of part of ground floor from residential to shop (A1).	Refused 11/10/1992 Appeal Dismissed 02/07/1992	– – –
42124	Change of use of part of ground floor from residential to A1 shop use.	Approved 01/08/1994	–
43477	Change of use to Indian takeaway	Approved	–

		01/03/1995	
43480	Erection of illuminated shop fascia sign.	Approved 01/03/1995	–
44402	Change of use of shop to restaurant.	Approved 07/12/1995	–
F/1996/63839	Proposed re-construction of shop front.	Approved 20/06/1996	–
A/1996/63812	Proposed erection of free standing illuminated advertising hoarding (retrospective).	Refused 21/06/1996	–
VAR/1996/63778	Proposed Variation To Condition 5 on Approval 43477 To Allow Sunday Opening.	Approved 27/06/1996	–
A/1996/63840	Proposed erection of illuminated fascia sign.	Approved 22/07/1996	–
F/1997/65580	Proposed Single Storey Rear Extension To Takeaway Shop And Change Of Use Of Part To Form Restaurant	Refused 17/07/1997	–
F/1997/65988	Proposed erection of timber freezer enclosure	Approved 17/10/1997	–
F/2000/1405	Proposed single storey rear extension to restaurant for storage of furniture.	Approved 14/06/2000	–
424 Reading Road and 426 Reading Road			
192231	Full application for the erection of a three storey building including 10No flats and 2No takeaway/restaurants following demolition of existing takeaway/restaurant and 2No flats.	Refused 10/10/2019	–
203604	Full application for the erection of three storey building including 6No flats and 2No takeaway/restaurants to the ground floor with associated parking following demolition of existing takeaway restaurant and 2No flats.	Approved 12/03/2021	
240682	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 203604 dated 12/03/2021. Condition 3, Construction Method Statement, Condition 4, Arboricultural Method Statement, Condition 5, Materials, Condition 6 Drainage, Condition 7, Ventilation and Extraction equipment, Condition 8, Boundary Walls and Fences, and Condition 9 Landscaping.	Split Decision 03/07/2025	

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Property Services – No comments received
WBC Environmental Health – No comments received

WBC Drainage – No objections
WBC Highways – No objections subject to conditions
WBC Economic Prosperity & Place (Community Infrastructure) – No comments received
WBC Landscape and Trees
WBC Health and Wellbeing – No comments received
WBC CIL – General CIL commentary
WBC Ecology Newts – No objection subject to conditions
WBC Ecology – No comments received
WBC Waste Services – No comments received
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No objections subject to conditions and informatives

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Winnersh Parish Council's Planning and Transport Committee had no observations to make on the application.
Ward Member(s)	Councillor Prue Bray: <i>"This appears to be a repeat of a previous application for which permission was granted but is imminently going to lapse, as work did not start. As an identical scheme was previously granted and nothing material has changed, it is very difficult to see any other possible outcome for this application other than approval."</i>
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site lies within a shopping frontage along Reading Road in Winnersh, the main road between the towns of Reading and Wokingham. The current building on the site contains two commercial units at ground floor level (most recently used as restaurants/takeaways)

Proposal Description:

The proposal includes the erection of a three storey building (the third storey being rooms in the roof) containing a restaurant and takeaway on the ground floor and 6 flats above. There would be 4x 1 bed flats and 2x 2 bed flats. Parking would be provided to the front and rear, along with a communal garden.

It is important to note that this application is an identical resubmission of permission 203604 which was approved on 12th March 2021. The reason for the submission is because the previous consent lapsed before commencement. The plans are identical (including the plan numbers), however there is some revised information pertaining to other material considerations such as Drainage and Highways matters.

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.

In addition to this, the principle of development is also reliant on the acceptability of the provision of a hot food takeaway unit and a restaurant on the ground floor. It is noted that there is already a restaurant on one side of the existing frontage, taking up the majority of the ground floor and a takeaway on the other. The proposal seeks the replacement of the existing units with another restaurant and takeaway. Policy TB15 states:

Planning permission will only be granted for proposals for main town centre uses within Wokingham town centre or small town/district centres where they demonstrate that:

- a) They are of a scale and form that is compatible with the retail character of the centre and its role in the hierarchy of retail centres*
- b) How it retains or increases the provision of Use Class A1 (Shops) in primary shopping frontages and the provision of Use Class A1 or A2 (Financial and professional services) or A3 (Restaurants and cafes) or A4 (Drinking establishments) or A5 hot food takeaways in secondary shopping frontages*
- c) They contribute to the provision of day and evening/night-time uses and are compatible with other uses*
- d) They enhance vitality and viability.*

The Council will also support the provision of office uses or self-contained dwellings in vacant or under used units above ground-floor town centre uses where a suitable/appropriate level of amenity for occupants can be provided. The Council will also support the provision of live-work units in appropriate locations.

The supporting text for this policy indicates the following:

Setting primary and secondary frontages and policies helps to manage the mix of uses in order to retain an appropriate balance of retail and complementary town centre uses. Retailing is the primary function of centres and the main contributor to vitality and viability.

In order to enhance the vitality and viability of these centres, primary shopping frontages should comprise a higher proportion of A1 uses, whereas secondary

frontages can offer a greater diversity of uses.

The proposal would result in the same ground floor uses as the existing situation. It is therefore acceptable in this regard. In any case, given that this is a secondary shopping frontage, the uses are supported by policy TB15 as the scheme would at least retain a restaurant and a takeaway. While it would not support retailing as the primary function of the district centre, it would not result in the loss of any frontage. Additionally, secondary frontages can incorporate a wider variety of units.

With regard the provision of dwellings above, these would not relate to the conversion of 'vacant or under used units'. However, there is already existing residential space above the existing restaurant and takeaway. It is not considered that the provision of additional units would harmfully impact the vitality of viability of the district centre. Especially as there appear to be a significant number of other residential units in adjacent buildings.

Being a commercial proposal it is also required to conform with TB20 of the MDD Local Plan, which states the following:

Planning permission will only be granted for commercial development proposals throughout the Borough that demonstrate:

- a. There is no harmful impact on the amenity of adjoining land uses in terms of noise, fumes and disturbance*
- b. There is no significant impact on highway safety*
- c. There is no significant adverse visual impact*
- d. There is no significant adverse environmental impact*

This is addressed in the relevant sections of the report below.

Based on the above, it is considered that the scheme is acceptable in principle.

Character of the Area, Neighbouring Amenity, External and Internal Amenity Space:

As explained above, this is an identical resubmission of permission 203604. Materially, there are no changes to the design/scale of the building or site layout. In terms of the immediate locale/context of the site, this has also not changed since the determination of consent 203604.

As a result of the above, the current proposals raise no additional concerns on these grounds and are acceptable.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

General Highway Safety, Vehicle/Cycle Parking Provision and Site Layout:

WBC Highways raise no objections on these grounds in light of the previous permission and the fact the site layout remains the same for this resubmission.

Additional cycle storage details have also been submitted which are acceptable. Compliance with these details will be secured via condition.

Construction Method Statement:

This application is supported by a Construction Method Statement (Motion, January 2026), previously conditioned as part of permission 203604.

WBC Highways have reviewed this statement and raise no objections to its contents. Compliance with the statement will be secured via condition.

Flooding and Drainage:

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of surface water flooding.

The application is supported by a Surface Water Drainage Strategy (Aegaea, May 2026). WBC Drainage have reviewed this strategy and have no concerns with its contents. Subject to compliance with the strategy submitted, WBC Drainage raise no objections to the proposed development.

Affordable Housing:

CP5 of the Core Strategy relates to the provision of affordable housing. It states:

Planning permission will be granted for residential development providing a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures and sizes. Affordable housing must reflect the sizes and types that meet the proven needs of people who are not able to compete in the general housing market.

All residential proposals of at least 5 dwellings (net) or covering a net site area of at least 0.16 ha will provide up to 50% of the net additional units proposed as affordable dwellings, where viable. The Council will negotiate the tenure, size and type of affordable units on a site by site basis having regard to housing needs, site specifics and other factors.

The proposed development does not meet the threshold for affordable housing contributions, due to the fact it only involves a net increase in 4 dwellings and the site area is only 0.14ha.

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.

WBC Landscape and Trees have no objection to this application as it is an identical resubmission of permission 203604.

Additional information has also been provided with this application including an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and detailed landscape plans which were previously required through conditions. WBC Landscape and Trees have reviewed this information and find these acceptable so compliance with the AMS, Detailed Planting Plan and Landscape Strategy plan will be conditioned.

Ecology:

Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.

The application site is located within a Red Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts.

The applicant has provided ecological information for the site: 'Further Information Regarding Great Crested Newt at 424-426 Reading Road, Winnersh, Wokingham, RG41 5EP', Darwin Ecology, January 2026. The walkover identified that the site habitats comprised mostly of developed land with sealed surfaces, bare ground of which approximately 85% had no vegetation, and individual trees. The GCN statement reports:

"Due to a lack of suitable habitat on site to support GCN and the lack of connectivity to areas of suitable habitat within the wide landscape, it is considered significantly unlikely that individuals or populations of GCN would be present on site. Additionally, it is not anticipated that individual GCN would access or utilise that site on occasion for commuting, foraging or resting purposes."

GCN are known to be historically present within 500m of the site, as well as the presence of a potential metapopulation inhabiting the ponds to the northwest. While that habitat on site may not be suitable for GCN, the results of demolition and construction activities can increase the suitability of the site. Newts may take shelter in rubble piles or beneath stored materials, and there is also a risk of individuals becoming trapped in open excavations. This could result in individual GCN being harmed as a consequence of development.

WBC Ecology are satisfied that the mitigation measures provided in the GCN statement adequately manage these risks. As such, compliance with the statement will be conditioned in the event of an approval.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

As of 2nd April 2024, a 10% Biodiversity net gain (BNG) for minor developments is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). This can be achieved through either on-site or off-site mitigation.

Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition").

"The biodiversity gain condition is a pre-commencement condition: once planning permission has been granted, a Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted and approved by the planning authority before commencement of the development.

The habitat baseline for the existing site is 0.61 habitat units. As per the conclusions of the report, a 10% gain cannot be achieved through on-site mitigation and will have to be secured through off-site mitigation.

Final details of the BNG mitigation off-site will be secured within the Biodiversity Gain Plan, automatically applied to the permission if approved.

Conclusion:

In summary, the proposals accord with the development plan. Subject to conditions, this application is recommended for approval.

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 reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. 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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	13 July 2026
Earliest date for decision:	26 March 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	13 July 2026