

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251733
Site Address:	The Metro Building, Toutley Road, Wokingham, RG41 1QN
Expiry Date:	12 September 2025
Site Visit Date:	23 July 2025
Proposal: Full application for first-floor ancillary office extension to storage building serving Units 3, 4, and 5.	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	TB11 – Core Employment Areas TB12 – Employment Skills Plan TB20 – Service Arrangements and Deliveries for Employment and Retail Use TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity DM10 - Flood Risk DM12 - Sustainable Transport Movements DM13 - High Quality Design of Minerals and Waste Development DM14 - Ancillary development DM15 - Site History
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 Location CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE2 – Environmental standards for non-residential development C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging ER1 – Core Employment Areas ER4 – Employment and skills plans FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE2 – Biodiversity net gain DH1 – Place making and quality design HC5 – Environmental protection

	HC8 – Noise pollution
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
41706	Erection of building for B2/B1(c)/B8 use.	Approved 17/11/1993

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received.
WBC Drainage – No objection.
WBC Highways – Request further information to show two additional spaces.
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection.
WBC Ecology – No objection.

External

None.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	One objection relating to loss of privacy impacts.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The site is located within settlement limits in Toutley Road Industrial Estate. The surrounding area is defined by a mix of light industrial and office use with the A329M to the north, Old Forest Meadows to the west of Old Forest Road and residential housing to the south of Toutley Road. Adjoining the site directly to the south is a redundant electricity substation and opposite the site is Charles House – a block of residential apartments.

The building is currently in Class B8 use – storage unit for a glazing company which is also located within the industrial estate (Units 3-5).

Proposal:

This application seeks approval for a first-floor extension above the existing storage unit to provide office space, kitchen and toilet, ancillary to a glazing business operating in Units 3-5 of Toutley Industrial Estate. The first-floor extension would retain the same footprint as the ground floor.

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.

The proposal is within the Toutley Industrial Estate Core Employment Area. TB11 of the MDD Local Plan refers to Core Employment Areas. CP15 of the Core Strategy outlines the location of such areas. It states that 'Development for business, industry or warehousing will be permitted, including the expansion or intensification of existing employment use.' will be allowed in these areas. 'Any proposed changes of use from B1, B2 and B8 should not lead to an overall net loss of floorspace in B use in the Borough'.

The proposal would not lead to the loss of business space. The existing ground floor storage unit would be retained with the addition of first floor office space above.

The proposed changes would increase the number of employees on site and would not impact the existing storage use.

The proposed changes are considered acceptable in principle.

Proposed use:

The proposal seeks planning permission for ancillary office space to a glazing business located in Units 3, 4 and 5 of Toutley Industrial Estate. The Class B8 storage space would be retained.

The proposed office space would be provided on the additional first-floor located above the storage area. There would be a small kitchen area and toilet on the first-floor to serve employees.

Core Strategy policy CP15 (Employment Development) states that 'Any proposed changes of use from B1, B2 & B8 should not lead to an overall net loss of floorspace in B Use within the borough. Provision will be made for a range of sizes, types, quality and locations of premises and sites to meet incubator/start up, move on, expansion and investment accommodation needs and having regard to the needs of specific sectors of the business community'. The proposed changes would retain the existing B8 – storage use and expand the building to include ancillary office space.

The proposal for office use would deliver office space for the applicant's existing glazing business which is in units 3-5 on the Toutley Industrial Estate. The proposed ancillary office use within the industrial estate is compatible with the existing surrounding commercial and office uses and would represent an efficient use of space. It is considered in this instance that the proposed changes are also acceptable in principle under policy CP15.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that 'maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment'. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states planning permission will be granted if development is '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'.

The addition of a first floor would be utilised as an office with the storage unit retained on the ground floor. The first floor would retain the footprint of the ground floor and would have a maximum ridge height of approximately 6.4m. It would be a relatively modest addition to the existing building within the context of the surrounding buildings. The proposed extension would measure approximately 28sqm in office floor area, which is in keeping with the character of the building as a commercial unit.

The character of the area is mainly two-storey industrial units and office spaces with a mix of flat and pitch roofs. Directly to the west of the host building are 2.no large industrial car repair warehouses which are significantly taller than the existing single-storey storage unit. To the east is the two-storey Crown House office unit which is also significantly taller than the height of the existing host building. Therefore, the addition of a first floor would be sympathetic and in keeping with the prevailing heights of neighbouring buildings and would not adversely impact the character of the host building or surrounding area.

The proposed materials include rendered finished walls and a metal roof. The material choice would be sympathetic too, and in-keeping with the material palette of surrounding residential and commercial units and are acceptable.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

One third party raised objection to the proposal due to the proposed first-floor windows in the front elevation that would serve the office space. The objector raises concern regarding the overlooking that would be generated to the objectors first-floor bedroom window within Charles House flats.

The Borough Design Guide (BDG) provides guidance on separation distances to be retained between buildings to maintain privacy and limit a sense of enclosure. As the proposal would increase the existing single-storey building to a two-storey building, the guidance for one to two storey buildings applies. Page 47 of the BDG recommends a minimum 10m separation distance to be retained between property frontages to limit loss of privacy. The proposed first-floor windows would retain a separation distance of approximately 17.3m between the front facing Charles House windows and the proposed fenestration. Therefore, the additional windows would comply with the guidance and would not generate any detrimental loss of privacy impacts to the occupants of the flat.

In addition, the office space would only be in use during the daytime (08:00-17:00) during the week, and between 08:00-12:00 at weekends. Therefore, during the evenings, when the bedroom will most likely be used, the application site will not be in operation, and thus, generate no adverse overlooking impact.

Loss of Light & Overbearing:

The proposed first-floor extension would be located approximately 1.5m from the eastern corner of the adjoining car repair warehouse, more than 20m from the flank wall of the Crown House commercial unit and more than 17m from the principal elevation of the three-storey Charles House residential flats. The height of the proposed development would measure approximately 6.3m, which would be subservient to the surrounding buildings.

Therefore, due to the significant separation distances and modest overall height of the development, there are no adverse overshadowing or overbearing impacts that would be generated.

Environmental Health:

The council's Environmental Health officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan set out the parking standards for development, noting that these should be regarded as a starting point with each site assessed on its own merits. Policy CP6 states that development should not have an adverse impact on the highway and alternative modes of transport to the private car

should be encouraged. A private parking area at the front/side of the building currently provides 3 car parking spaces.

The council's Highways officer was consulted and requested two additional vehicle spaces to be shown within the red line of the site. The site is a relatively small plot and confined to the parking driveway area and building footprint. Therefore, additional parking within the red line is not possible.

Buses:

Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy states “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”. The Borough Design Guide SPD states ‘if places are to be sustainable then the aim should be to create: Walkable neighbourhoods, with a range of facilities within 10 minutes walking distance of residential areas, which encourage people to travel on foot or by bicycle.’ Walkable neighbourhoods are defined in Manual for Streets (MfS) as those typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes walking distance from residential areas. Manual for Streets clarifies that 10 minutes walking distance is roughly 800 metres.

The supporting text to policy CP6 of the Core Strategy sets out the requirement of a good bus service:

- a) At least a thirty-minute service frequency during peak times (7:00 to 9:00 and 16:00 to 19:00 Monday to Saturday); and
- b) At least an hourly service frequency during off-peak hours (9:00 to 16:00 and 19:00 to 22:00 Monday to Saturday and between 7:00 and 22:00 on Sundays).

Thames Valley Buses route 122 connects the site with the north and northwestern Wokingham Town suburbs. The service offers half-hourly and hourly services between 09:14 and 15:23 and does not operate on Sundays. The Dog and Duck bus stop is located approximately 0.39 miles (627m) from the application site.

Bus route 4 and 4A of Reading Buses connects Reading and Bracknell via Wokingham and provides hourly services throughout the day with buses running between 08:10 and 20:51 but no service provided on Sundays. The closest bus stop to the application site is the Sadlers Lane Bus stop which is approximately 0.75 miles (1200m).

Although the location of the Reading Buses bus stop falls outside of the recommended 800m, standards set out in The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation's (CIHT) “Providing for journeys on Foot” CIHT suggests that recommended maximum walking distances to shops and facilities is between 800m and 1200m. It must however be noted that these distances are only recommended for pedestrians without a mobility impairment.

In summary, given the scale of the scheme, and ancillary use of office space, it would not generate significant movements, and although the bus services available to the site may not meet all the requirements set out in CS policy CP6, the distances are not overly far to the public transport connections and are within acceptable limits.

Cycle:

There is an 'Off Carriageway' designated cycle route (Toutley Road) that connects the site with the surrounding areas which is located approximately 40m from the application site and provides an attractive route to cyclists. The existing cycling infrastructure in the local area would likely encourage an uptake in modal journeys by bicycle; Toutley Road provides wide footways, regular street lighting and 30mph vehicle speeds. The conditions would likely lead to employees shifting from cars to bicycle.

Summary:

Whilst not a material planning consideration, there is unrestricted parking along Toutley Road which could be utilised if required. In addition, the office space would be ancillary to the existing glazing business that operates from Units 3, 4 and 5 Toutley Industrial Estate. These units include parking facilities which could also be utilised if required.

In summary, there are other modes of transport available within the local area which have the potential for employees to access the application site by modes of transport other than private vehicle. Although the two additional on-site parking spaces requested by Highways cannot be catered for within the red line, the existing parking facilities at Units 3-5 could be used and/or two additional vehicles potentially utilising on-street parking within the industrial estate are not considered to generate adverse impacts to highway safety.

Flooding and Drainage:

Core Strategy Policy CP1 Sustainable Development and MDD LP Policy CC09 Development and Flood Risk (from all sources) establish that new development should avoid increasing and where possible reduce flood risk. The LPU Policy FD1 requires developments to consider flood risk from all sources.

The application site lies within Flood Zone 1, i.e. outside areas at risk of flooding. Footnote 63 to paragraph 181 of the NPPF requires that a site-specific flood risk assessment is provided for all development, including in Flood Zone 1, where the site is greater than 1 hectare. The application site measures approximately 0.07 hectares therefore, a flood risk assessment is not required.

The Council's Drainage officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal.

Landscape and Trees:

As existing, there are no soft landscaping features on site. The Council's Trees and Landscape officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal.

Biodiversity Net Gain ("BNG"):

Section 70A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ("TCPA") sets out that where planning permission is granted, it is subject to a pre-commencement condition to secure that the biodiversity gain objective is met.

By virtue of the extension being located above the footprint of the existing building, the application site would not impact on-site area habitats of 25m² or more, or on-site linear habitats of 5m or more. As such, the scheme is exempt and is not required to deliver BNG.

Ecology:

Core Strategy Policies CP3 General Principles for Development and CP7 Biodiversity establish that proposals should not have a detrimental impact on ecological features. Species and habitats of conservation value should be protected and the ability of a site to support fauna and flora, including protected species, should be maintained and enhanced. In addition, MDD LP Policy TB23 Biodiversity and Development requires proposals to enhance and incorporate new biodiversity features, provide appropriate buffer zones between development and designated sites as well as habitats and species of principle importance for nature conservation and ensure ecological permeability.

Great Crested Newts

The application site lies within a green impacts zone for Great Crested Newts ("GCN"). This means that there is generally low likelihood of GCN being present within the site.

Bats

The application site lies within an area potentially suitable for bat roosts. The existing building has a flat roof with limited opportunities for bat roosts. The Council's Ecology officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal. Notwithstanding, a bat informative will be added to any grant of approval.

Conclusion:

The proposed changes and addition of office space will allow the existing glazing business to expand, whilst retaining the existing Class B8 use. The proposed office is compatible within the industrial estate setting and does not give rise to any concerns regarding highway safety or neighbouring amenity. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable and is recommended for approval.

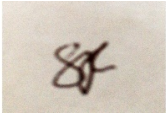
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a 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, 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:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve

Date:	5 September 2025
Earliest date for decision:	12 August 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	26.9.25

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Core Employment Location | Total count: 1

TYPE	NAME
Core Employment Area	Toutley Industrial Estate

Scale and Location of Development Proposals | Total count: 1

	FEATURE_TYPE	NAME
1	Major Development Locations	Wokingham

Strategic Development Locations | Total count: 1

	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Strategic Development Location	North Wokingham

Preferred Waste Areas | Total count: 1

	Site_Name	Land_Type	Class_Use
1	Toutley Road Depot	No data	Suitable for B class Use

EA Groundwater Zones | Total count: 1

	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Groundwater Consultation Zones	Groundwater Consultation Zone 1	Environment Agency (only if application involves contaminated land) – see separate sheet: When to consult the Environment Agency

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water | Total count: 1

	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability | Total count: 1

	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	WC772	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone	Green	Consult NatureSpace for Major developments only

SSSI Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

	IRZURL
1	https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0300000530000-es=&location=473915,172259%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)

Potentially Contaminated Land Zones | Total count: 1

	FEATURE_TYPE	OBJECTID
1	Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation Zone	1

Water Utility Consultation Zones | Total count: 1

	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT_WHEN
1	Water Utility Consultation Zone	South East Water Supply Area	New dwellings

Wards | Total count: 1

	NAME	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Emmbrook Ward	0 m

Parishes | Total count: 1

	NAME	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Wokingham CP	0 m