

MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	261098
Address:	Whiteknights Campus, Reading, URS Building Faculty of Urban Regenerative Studies, Reading, RG6 6EN		
Proposal:	Full application for the removal and replacement of existing boundary fencing and gates to Whiteknights Campus.		
Heritage Assets:	<i>Designated:</i> • The Lodge, Whiteknights Road (Grade II, Ref. 1319122) (Erleigh Lodge) • Foxhill House, Whiteknights Park (Grade II*, Ref. 1136050) • Former Stables and Coach House (of Foxhill House), Whiteknights Park (Grade II, Ref. 1271248) • Foxhill Gate Lodge (curtilage to Foxhill House) • North Lodge, Whiteknights Road (Grade II, Ref. 1136059) • South Lodge, Whiteknights Road (Grade II, Ref. 111828) • Landscape feature at the Wilderness (Grade II, Ref. 1118127) • Reading War Room (Grade II, Ref. 1393194) <i>Non-designated:</i> • Whiteknights Park - Local Historic Park and Garden • Wilderness Lodge • Swiss Cottage (Lodge to The Wilderness)		
Site Visit Made:	Not specifically, but familiar with the site		

Summary Of Recommendations

No objection

Comments On Proposal

The application proposes the erection of new fencing and gates around most of the circumference of the University of Reading's Whiteknights campus. The campus contains a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets,

including the park itself, as identified above. As the campus is partly located within Wokingham Borough Council and partly within Reading Borough Council's area, this application only concerns the WBC portion of the campus.

It is proposed to remove the various extant fencing and boundary treatments and to replace with, or to install (where none currently exist) a consistent type, form and appearance of metal fencing. It is also proposed to install or replace a number of gates, in a matching style to the fencing. The purpose of which is to create a consistent and defensible boundary, as a requirement of the functionality of the university. None of the extant boundary elements to be removed are historic, or might be identified as curtilage listed and thus there would be no impact or loss of historic fabric. Notwithstanding this, it is still important the proposed design is sympathetic and appropriate for the historic environment. The proposed fencing and gates are of a consistent height of 1.78m (just under 6ft), formed of mild-steel, coloured black with a 'hooped' or 'bowtop' design. Whilst metal railings are found throughout the historic environment from the 17th century onwards, this design is not particularly historic, but equally can be considered of a relatively traditional appearance. It is certainly less contemporary than other alternatives, and thus on balance is appropriate for the setting. Given this, no objection is raised to the proposed design.

Whilst it is recognised there is a need for consistency, and indeed for economies of scale for a project like this, the application represents a missed opportunity to enhance the historic environment, notably the immediately setting to various lodges, notably Wilderness Lodge, Erleigh Lodge and Foxhill Lodge. The extant gate at Wilderness Lodge is nothing special, just a plain five-bar gate, but not inappropriate. At Erleigh Lodge the extant modern gates and piers (1980s?) actively detract from the Waterhouse building – thus with these two, there is an opportunity to bring forward a more appropriate design to enhance the setting of the lodges. By contrast the Waterhouse Lodge for Foxhill has some fine oak gates – and whilst there are fairly recent, they are of a high design standard and (whilst not in the best condition) do positively contribute to the setting of the curtilage listed lodge and form an appropriate entrance to the historic park. The proposed replacements would result in somewhat of a downgrade from the existing, which is disappointing to note. I would not consider the proposed design to actively harm the significance of the heritage assets, but equally would not represent an enhancement (at least for Wilderness and Foxhill lodges). On a related note, from memory there is/was an additional matching pedestrian gate as a separate entrance to Foxhill Lodge located forward of the vehicular/pedestrian gates in question – it may well still be there but hidden by the vegetation. It would be interesting to know what has become of this, and would it be retained?

With this in mind, no objection is raised to the application from a heritage perspective with no harm identified to the designated heritage assets. However, the applicant is urged to reconsider the gate designs for the aforementioned lodges, as to create a more sympathetic and appropriate appearance.

Conditions

N/A			
Date:	01/06/2026	Signed:	Roderick McDonald Built Heritage Officer

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