

**Ascot House, Finchampstead Road,
Wokingham, RG40 2NW**
Planning Statement

Klara Ascot Limited
August 2024

tor
&co

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by tor&co and is submitted on behalf of Klara Ascot Limited (the 'Applicant') in support of an application for full planning permission for the creation of 10 x C3 residential units through an upwards extension at Ascot House, Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 2NW (the 'Site').
- 1.2 The application is submitted to Wokingham Borough Council ('WBC') and sets out the planning case in support of the proposals in the context of national and local planning policy and guidance.
- 1.3 The description of the Proposed Development ('the Proposed Development') is set out below:

Upward and side extension of existing building comprising 10 additional residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with associated car parking, cycle parking, refuse stores, hard and soft landscaping and associated works

- 1.4 The structure of this Planning Statement is as follows:
- **Section 2** details the background and context for the Site, including its planning history;
 - **Section 3** outlines the Proposed Development;
 - **Section 4** sets out the relevant planning policy framework for the Site;
 - **Section 5** evaluates the application proposal in the context of the planning policy framework and other material considerations; and
 - **Section 6** summarises our conclusions.

Supporting Information

- 1.5 This Statement should be read alongside the following documents which are also submitted to reflect the Proposed Development:

Document Title	Prepared by
Application Form, Covering Letter and Notices	tor&co
Existing and Proposed Drawings	T2S Architecture
Design & Access Statement	T2S Architecture

Planning Statement	tor&co
Townscape & Visual Impact Assessment	Bryant Landscape Planning
Arboricultural Impact Assessment	Lizard Landscape Design & Ecology
Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment	Lizard Landscape Design & Ecology
Landscape Masterplan & Design Strategy	Lizard Landscape Design & Ecology
Daylight & Sunlight Assessments	Right of Light Consulting
Energy & Stainability Statement	JS Lewis Ltd
Transport Statement	TPP Consulting
Construction Method Statement	PRP Surveying
Drainage Strategy	PRP Environmental
Financial Viability Assessment	tor&co

2.0 Site Context & Planning History

Existing Site

- 2.1 The 0.25ha Site is located at Ascot House, Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 2NW. A site location plan is outlined below in red in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan

- 2.2 The Site currently comprises a two-storey plus basement residential building comprising 24 self-contained Class C3 units. The building was converted from office to C3 residential under permitted development rights in 2020 under applications referenced 211148 and 212322. The building was also subject to various façade improvements, including the removal of a pitched roof, to allow for future upward extension works to deliver additional housing into the Site under reference application 211020. These permissions are outlined further in the planning history sub-section below.
- 2.3 The building is finished to a red-brick material and has a flat roof. The surrounding area is hardstanding surface car park with space for 24 car parking spaces. There is a row of dense vegetation and trees abutting the western boundary of the Site, providing a degree natural screening.

- 2.4 The Site lies within the Elms Field Character Area. The Site does not fall within a Conservation Area, nor are there any locally or statutory listed buildings on site.
- 2.5 The Site lies within Flood Zone 1, where there is a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea.
- 2.6 The Wokingham Polices Map defines the Site as being within a Major Development Location, Wokingham Town Centre, and the Thames Basin Heaths SPA 7km Buffer Zone.

Surrounding Area

- 2.7 The Site is bound by residential uses to the north, south and east comprising predominantly two or three storey buildings.
- 2.8 To the west, across Finchampstead Road lies the Carnival Pool Leisure Centre and Library site, which forms part of a major town centre regeneration project and are in areas that form part of the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan, a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which sets out Wokingham Borough Council's vision for development in Wokingham moving towards 2026. A recently built five storey Premier Inn has also just been built to the north-west of the Site across the roundabout.
- 2.9 There are a number of regeneration schemes being progressed in the vicinity of the Site which are further outlined in Section 3 of the Design & Access Statement.
- 2.10 The Site lies within Wokingham Town Centre meaning there are a range of facilities and services nearby including supermarkets, restaurants, public houses, health services and a library. Elm's Field Playground is located approximately 5 minutes' walk away from the Site, providing easy access to public open space.

Access

- 2.11 Vehicular and pedestrian access to the Site is from Kendrick Close which connects to the roundabout directly adjacent the Site.
- 2.12 The Site is a highly accessible location within close proximity to public transport services, being located within a ten-minute walk from Wokingham Station. Wokingham Station provides GWR and South Western Railway services directly to London Waterloo, Reading, and Gatwick Airport on a frequent basis. Additionally, the Site is within close walking distance to bus stops which are serviced by buses 92, 121, 125, 125A, 125B and 145.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.13 A desk-top search of WBC's online database has been carried out to determine the relevant planning history for Ascot House which is outlined in **Table 1** below:

WBC reference	Description	Decision
213400	Full application for the proposed erection of a part two storey, part 4 storey side and upward extension, to create 19 no. dwellings, plus associated parking, and additional works.	Withdrawn 01/03/2022
211020	Full application for the proposed external façade works comprising of replacement of existing pitched roof with a flat roof and brick parapet, replacement of existing windows with new windows and integrated perforated panels, removal of existing entrance canopy and creation of new recessed entrance, plus the construction of a lightwell to existing basement level, external cycle and bin store, and associated works.	Approved 08/06/2021
213066	Application for non-material amendment to planning consent 211020 to allow detailed design development, a slight reconfiguration of the consented windows has been proposed, with the previously consented perforated panels to be replaced with grey handmade brickwork.	Approved 28/09/2021
212322	Prior approval submission for the change of use of the basement level of Ascot House, from office use (Class B1(a)) to residential use (Class C3), comprising of 3no. dwellings.	Approved 25/08/2021
211148	Prior approval submission for proposed conversion of office building (Use Class E(i)) to 21 no. residential units (Use Class C3).	Approved 27/04/2021
210998	Prior approval submission for proposed conversion of office building (Use Class E(i)) to 24 no. residential units (Use Class C3).	Refused 10/05/2021
203094	Prior approval submission for the proposed change of use from office (Use Class B1(a)) to 21no. residential units (Use Class C3).	Approved 18/12/2020

WBC reference	Description	Decision
200534	Prior approval submission for proposed conversion of office building (Use Class B1(a)) to 20 no. residential units (Use Class C3).	Approved 01/04/2020
193408	Prior approval submission for proposed conversion of office building (Use Class B1(a)) to 20 no. residential units (Use Class C3).	Refused 10/02/2020

Table 1: Planning History of The Site

- 2.14 As noted earlier, the Site has been converted into 24 no. residential dwellings in line with prior approval applications 211148 and 212322.
- 2.15 A full planning application (ref. 213400) comprising an upward extension to Ascot House proposals was submitted but subsequently withdrawn in March 2022. This current application builds upon the feedback from this permission, along with further pre-application advice received thereafter which is discussed in further detail below.
- 2.16 Several applications in close proximity to the Site are also considered of relevance to this application's proposals. These are detailed in **Table 2** below:

Location	WBC reference	Description	Decision
Land adjacent to Norton Road Wokingham Berkshire RG40 2BD	150066	Erection of 6 x two bedroom flats and 3 x two bedroom terraced houses including demolition of existing light industrial unit.	Approved 30 July 2015
Land Between Wellington Road & Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 2QB (Elms Field Masterplan Phase 1)	153125	Full application for the erection of mixed use development for Town Centre uses, a 95-bed hotel, 126 residential units; re-configured town park; new and re- configured public car parking and partial closure of Elms Road (south) and provision of a new road to link Wellington Road and Shute End, as part of the	Approved 27 November 2015

Location	WBC reference	Description	Decision
		regeneration of Wokingham Town Centre.	
West Forest Gate Wellington Road/ Finchampstead Wokingham RG40 2AT	182460	Full planning application for demolition of the existing B1 (office) building and the erection of 2 buildings to provide 49 apartments, car parking, vehicular and pedestrian access, and landscaping.	Approved 21 May 2019

Table 2: Nearby Relevant Planning Permissions

Pre-Application Advice

- 2.17 Pre-application advice (WBC ref. 231834) was sought from WBC related to the emerging proposals in August 2023 with a formal written response received on 12th September 2023.
- 2.18 The pre-application proposals were for proposed alterations to the existing building and erection of 10 no. additional dwellings, plus construction of 1 no. detached house on neighbouring land fronting Finchampstead Road which is also within the applicant's ownership.
- 2.19 A summary of the pre-application feedback is provided below:
- The principle of development is considered acceptable, being within a sustainable town centre location, Major Development Location and within a settlement boundary.
 - The Proposed Development supports the overarching aims of housing delivery, sustainable transport and the efficient use of land as identified within the NPPF, and this will be afforded great weight in the overall balance at full application stage.
 - A financial contribution of 2 x affordable homes should be sought in-lieu, unless demonstrated unviable through a Financial Viability Statement.
 - The Site is not suitable for a landmark (i.e. taller) building, however based on the significant level change on Site, increased building height is considered acceptable.
 - The increased density on the Site is considered appropriate and Officers raised no objection to the proposed building line.

- Proposed cycle and refuse stores should be shielded from views on Finchampstead Road, or the existing provision should be extended.
 - The proposed design was considered to respond positively to the surrounding character and makes an overall positive appearance on the street scene. A Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment should accompany any full application.
 - There are no negative impacts on nearby heritage assets or Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area.
 - All flatted units complied with internal space standards, but minor shortfalls on private amenity space identified against Design Guidance which was considered acceptable given apartment typology and town centre location.
 - There were concerns with overlooking to Kendrick Close with separation distances as close as 8m at second floor, however the provision of privacy screens and recessed balconies to mitigate overlooking issues was supported given there was no change to existing condition.
 - Due to the proposed roof overhang, any full application should be supported by a Daylight and Sunlight assessment demonstrating the proposed and existing units achieve acceptable levels of daylight and sunlight in accordance with BRE Guidance.
 - Vehicle and bicycle parking standards would need to be in line with the Borough Standards, along with appropriate access for emergency and delivery vehicles.
 - The substantial vegetative screen on land to the north-west of the site will be important to retain, a biodiversity net gain of 10% would need to be achieved.
- 2.20 The pre-application feedback was largely positive and supported the pre-application proposals. As such, there has been little change to the Proposed Development following the pre-application engagement, except for the exclusion of the provision of a residential dwelling fronting Finchampstead Road.
- 2.21 The height of the proposals has been retained based on the existing gradient, natural screening and support for increased density on site.
- 2.22 The existing refuse storage will remain and will be increased to accommodate the additional units and adhere to the adopted standards, therefore will remain shielded from views on Finchampstead Road. Cycle parking will be implemented to account for the existing and proposed units on site in line with the adopted cycle parking standards.
- 2.23 All units have access to private amenity space in the form of balconies, and privacy screening has been included where appropriate.
- 2.24 Daylight and Sunlight testing has been undertaken which confirms that the Proposed Development would be acceptable and in accordance with BRE Guidance.

- 2.25 The submitted Financial Viability Assessment confirms that the upward extension would not be able to generate the required surplus to enable to provision of affordable housing contributions.
- 2.26 The existing substantial vegetative screen on neighbouring land to the north-west of the Site would not be impacted and the accompanying Landscaping Plan and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment shows the proposed landscaping features result in a biodiversity net gain of 11.53%, exceeding the statutory required 10% uplift.

3.0 The Proposed Development

3.1 As previously noted, the description of development is for:

Upward and side extension of existing building comprising 10 additional residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with associated car parking, cycle parking, refuse stores, servicing areas, hard and soft landscaping and associated works

3.2 The Proposed Development intends to provide an additional 744sqm GIA of residential floorspace (incl. communal areas). The proposed housing type and size of the units are outlined below in **Table 3**.

Unit	No. of Beds	Type	Amenity Space (sqm)	GIA (sqm)
1.01	2	2B/3P	3.5	64.9
1.02	2	2B/3P	3.5	64.3
1.03	1	1B/1P	20.7	38.3
2.01	2	2B/4P	12.8	83.5
2.02	2	2B/4P	10.1	85.4
2.03	2	2B/4P	28	98.2
2.04	1	1B/2P	9.1	52.8
2.05	2	2B/4P	6.0	86.3
2.06	2	2B/4P	6.0	85.2
2.07	2	2B/4P	19.4	83.1

Table 3: Proposed Housing Type & Size

- 3.3 All units meet and exceed Nationally Described Space Standards and will have access to private open space in the form of balconies.
- 3.4 The Proposed Development has been designed to integrate with the existing 24 units approved as per prior approval applications 211148 and 212322. As such, access to the new units will be via the existing front entrance of Ascot House from Kendrick Close, with internal communal stairs taking residents to the proposed units on the first, second and third floors.
- 3.5 An additional 12 x vehicle parking spaces are proposed to serve the new units, totalling 36 x car parking on site (1.06 ratio).
- 3.6 Provision for a minimum of 62 x bicycles will be provided within a secure cycle store at the western side of the building via a two-tier Josta rack, serving the existing and proposed units.
- 3.7 In terms of waste and recycling provision, the existing waste store located at the northern edge of the Site will accommodate additional refuse storage. There will

be increased provision to serve the additional 10 units in the form of 1 x 1100L general waste bin, and 7 x 240L recycling bins.

- 3.8 Additional landscaping and drainage enhancements have been proposed to optimise the environmental benefits of the scheme. Our approach includes additional soft landscaping & planting, a storm planter, and permeable paving. The proposals result in a biodiversity net gain of 11.53%, exceeding statutory requirements.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 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.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

- 4.2 The current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published December 2023 and replaces the previous iteration updated in September 2023. The document sets out Government planning policies for England and how these are to be applied in decision making. It is supported by National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), launched as an online resource on 6th March 2014, which seeks to provide further detail, clarification and guidance on national policy contained within the NPPF. The NPPG brings together and updates the previous raft of PPG documents into one online resource.
- 4.3 The NPPF and NPPG are material considerations in the determination of planning applications and are referred to within this statement and other supporting application documents where relevant and appropriate. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making (Para 2).
- 4.4 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development (Para 11), which for decision making means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

- 4.5 In line with the NPPF (December 2023) transitional arrangements (Para 77 and 226), WBC is required to demonstrate a minimum of four-years HLS against the five-year requirement, using the standard methodology local housing need (LHN). This is because the adopted local plan (2010 & 2014) is more than five years old, and the housing requirement therein needs updating, and WBC has reached Regulation 18 Stage on their draft local plan in 2020.
- 4.6 WBC cannot currently demonstrate a 4-year housing land supply (4YHLS), the most recent monitoring report (March 2023) confirms the Council can demonstrate a 3.2 years supply, therefore as per para 11 of the NPPF, the 'tilted balance' will be engaged in decision making.

The Development Plan

- 4.7 The adopted Development Plan for the WBC currently comprises the following planning documents:
- Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted January 2010);
 - Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan (adopted February 2014);
 - Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (adopted January 2023);
 - South East Plan Policy NRM6 (adopted May 2010); and
 - WBC's Proposals Map (accessed using WBC Online Interactive Portal).

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

- 4.8 In addition, the following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have been identified which are considered relevant to the Proposed Development as follows:
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (May 2010);
 - Affordable Housing SPD (July 2013);
 - Borough Design Guide SPD (June 2012); and
 - Wokingham Town Centre SPD (June 2010).

Site Specific Policies and Designations

- 4.9 As shown in WBC's adopted Policies Map, the Site is currently subject to the following) site-specific policy designations:
- Major Development Locations;
 - Wokingham Town Centre; and
 - Thames Basin Heaths SPA 7km Zone.

Emerging Wokingham Local Plan

- 4.10 WBC's adopted Development Plan documents are out of date and a new draft Local Plan is currently being prepared which is currently at Regulation 18 stage. Upon completion it will replace the current Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery plans which cover the period to 2026.
- 4.11 WBC's latest Local Development Scheme (July 2023) anticipated a Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation to be undertaken in November 2023 with submission to follow in March – June 2024. This has not occurred at the time of writing this Statement, therefore there will be a delay to the adoption of the new

Local Plan. Accordingly, the draft policies should be afforded limited weight in the decision-making process.

Housing Supply

- 4.12 Paragraph 74 of the NPPF states that;

'Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.'

- 4.13 Changes to the NPPF in December 2023 set out circumstances related to the ongoing nature of adopting a new Development Plan, which under certain circumstances only require local planning authorities to identify a four-year supply, rather than five years where particular criteria have been met. The Wokingham Draft Local Plan is currently at Regulation 18 stage, including a policies map and proposed allocations towards housing need, therefore WBC is only required to evidence a four-year housing land supply.¹
- 4.14 As the WBC Core Strategy (2010) is now more than five years old, the housing requirement therein should be updated to accord with the Government's most recent standard methodology, deriving local housing need. As per WBC's latest Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement (5YHLS, published 26th January 2024) WBC has calculated their current Local Housing Need as 795 homes per annum or 3,975 homes over the five-year period.
- 4.15 Although it is noted that WBC's latest 5YHLS Statement has not calculated a Four-Year Housing Supply explicitly, the 5YHLS Statement confirms the Council can only demonstrate 3.2 years' supply (equivalent to 2,545 homes) against a Five-Year Housing Land Supply requirement.
- 4.16 As WBC can demonstrate neither a five nor four-year supply of deliverable sites, the presumption in favour of sustainable development as outlined at paragraph 11 of the NPPF, applies.

¹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *NPPF Paragraph 77 & Paragraph 226*, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf>, [accessed April 2024]

5.0 Planning Assessment

5.1 This section assesses the Proposed Development against the relevant national, strategic, and local planning policies. It assesses the following key planning considerations in turn:

- Principle of Residential Development;
- Density;
- Design, Scale & Massing;
- Residential Mix (including affordable housing);
- Residential Quality;
- Transport, Access, and Servicing; and
- Technical Matters.

Principle of Residential Development

- 5.2 The principle of residential development has already been established on site through the existing 24 residential units (as approved via permissions 211148 and 212322). The principle of development has also been confirmed as being acceptable by WBC planning officers as part of pre-application discussions in September 2023.
- 5.3 The NPPF (Para 60) supports the Government's objective of 'significantly boosting' the supply of homes by ensuring a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed.
- 5.4 NPPF policies also consider residential use to be an acceptable town centre use with Para 90(f) recognises that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites.
- 5.5 The development proposes a part 1.5 and part 2.5 storey upwards extension to create an additional 10 x residential homes on the Site that will contribute towards a pressing need for housing within the borough. The proposals ensure the best use of land is achieved and provides new homes in a sustainable location in line with the aspirations of the NPPF.
- 5.6 The adopted local plan is out-of-date, being adopted in 2010 and 2014 making the housing targets within this document redundant. More recently, the councils Five Year Land Supply Report (March 2023) notes that WBC have a minimum requirement of delivering 795 dwellings per year. The report goes on to find that WBC can only demonstrate a 3.2 year housing land supply. As such the presumption of sustainable development (i.e. the 'tilted balance') would be engaged in line with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF.
- 5.7 At the local level, Policies CC01 and CP3 support the optimised use of sites and sustainable development. The Site is located within a Major Development Location where Core Strategy Policy CP9 supports the principle of major

residential development as an acceptable form of development, subject to other material planning considerations. Further, CS13 and TB15 support the provision of residential use within designated town centres.

- 5.8 Where it is successfully demonstrated and accepted that any harm which arises as a result of the Proposed Development can be successfully mitigated (which is discussed further below), then the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable because it accords with the adopted Development Plan and the spatial vision for the Site. By seeking to optimise housing delivery on site, an opportunity exists to enhance the contribution that it makes to the vitality of the Borough and Wokingham Town Centre by locating homes in a sustainable location.
- 5.9 Overall, the principle of residential development in this sustainable location is considered acceptable in planning terms.

Density

- 5.10 The NPPF (Para123) requires planning decisions to promote effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. Paragraph 124 part e) specifically references supporting development opportunities to utilise the airspace above existing residential premises through upwards extensions subject to them being consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties.
- 5.11 The NPPF advises that LPAs should avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site (Para 129). It also outlines that planning policies and decisions should ensure developments are sympathetic to local character while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change, such as increased densities (Para 135).
- 5.12 At the local level, Core Strategy Policy CP5 notes that planning permission will be granted for residential development providing a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures, and sizes. No specific density guidelines are provided in adopted policy.
- 5.13 Emerging Policy H3 similarly does not prescribe density thresholds but seeks to deliver appropriate densities for an area and that housing be optimised through good design, and where appropriate at higher densities in town centres. Emerging Policy ER9 (Wokingham Town Centre) also supports higher density developments where appropriate, and subject to other town centre objectives and design considerations being considered.
- 5.14 The Borough Design Guide similarly does not prescribe appropriate density limits, but rather notes at R10: *“The assessment of an appropriate density must be design-led as well as considering the number of units per hectare, to ensure that development relates well to local character. This includes:*
- *“the height, bulk and massing of buildings;*
 - *the space around and gaps between them; and*
 - *the space required for parking.”*

- 5.15 The Site and the Proposed Development is the type and form of development that adopted and emerging policy seeks to support. The Proposed Development utilises underutilised airspace above an existing building and the Site is excellently located for residents to utilise sustainable forms of transport to access employment plus daily goods & services elsewhere in the town centre. The Site is also located on the outer edge of the town centre and therefore offers opportunities to achieve an important transition scale in height, scale and density from town centre to adjoining residential areas.
- 5.16 In quantitative terms, when combined with the 24 x existing on-site units, the 10 x proposed additional units, would deliver a site-wide total of 34 x units, which equates to a density of 136 units/hectare. This is considered an acceptable and optimised density for the site given its town centre location.
- 5.17 The height, bulk and massing of the upward pitched roof extension has been designed to allow the building to remain in keeping with neighbouring heights and typology and to avoid any potential overbearing impacts to adjacent residential uses. Separation distances have been retained to existing conditions between neighbouring buildings and roads to protect neighbouring privacy, and an appropriate level of parking against the proposed number of units have all been considered and achieved to ensure a design-led response has been achieved and is therefore considered an appropriate level of density given the location of the building.
- 5.18 The pre-application response acknowledges the proposed densities are considered acceptable given the town centre location, and that the proposals make best use of previously developed land. The Proposed Development is therefore in line with policy at all levels, the proposals seek to fully optimise a sustainable brownfield site for residential use and are informed through a design-led process to appropriately contribute towards the borough's housing needs.

Design, Height, Scale, Massing & Townscape

- 5.19 The NPPF (Section 12) states that *“the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”*.
- 5.20 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF emphasises how *“Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:*
- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or*
 - b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.”*

- 5.21 Policy CP3 requires development proposals to be appropriate in terms of mass, layout, built form, height, materials, and character to the area together with a high quality of design. Furthermore, proposals should provide a functional, accessible, safe, secure, and adaptable scheme that contributes to the sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves in the way buildings integrate with their surroundings, including the use of appropriate landscaping.
- 5.22 The Borough Design Guide SPD provides detailed guidance on all matters of residential development, including:
- Character and context.
 - Incorporating site features and characteristics.
 - Ensuring housing is well connected and provided with sufficient parking without impacting street scene.
 - Delineation between private and public areas.
 - Frontages should provide natural surveillance and coherent building lines.
 - Buildings on corners should have two front elevations on prominent corners may also contribute as landmark buildings.
 - Heights of buildings should respond to a number of factors, including: prevailing heights, scale of importance of building in relation to its surroundings, its position in the street hierarchy, building setbacks, and whether it's a landmark location.
 - Density should be considered from a design-led perspective.
 - Buildings should be designed to relate well to existing street scene in terms of scale, rhythm, proportion, height, materials and colour.
 - Boundary treatments should contribute positively to the character of an area.
 - Open space provision and good quality hard and soft landscaping plus access to some form of amenity space.
 - Designed to provide privacy to habitable rooms and suitable levels of daylight and sunlight to existing and proposed dwellings.
 - Provide appropriate layouts to meet a range of needs, including well laid-out living rooms and bedrooms.
 - Well considered ancillary elements such as bin stores, cycle stores, fences, walls, lighting, gutters and pipes, etc.
 - Sustainability features, including promoting walking and cycling, conservation of water resources, sustainable construction methods, future adaptability, and crime prevention.

- For extension and alterations, proposals should be well designed, respond positively to the original building, contribute positively to the local character, and relate well to neighbouring properties.
- 5.23 The Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD does identify the site as an 'opportunity site', but the Site does sit within the Elms Field Character Area. One of the key overall objectives of the SPD is 5.5. 'Setting the Design Standard'. This highlights that new development should achieve the highest quality of architecture, urban design and environmental design. We also note the Site is located opposite the recently developed Premier Inn which is a landmark location on the corner of the Carnival site that fronts the Finchampstead roundabout.
- 5.24 For full details of the proposed design, please refer to the Design and Access Statement (DAS) prepared by T2S Architecture which has been submitted alongside this planning application. Overall, the design proposals reference local architectural detailing, style and character and have evolved in consultation with WBC. They have been informed by the following design objectives:
- Extend an existing building in a sensitive way;
 - Create a building of architectural merit;
 - Respect local form and character through an appropriate choice of form and materiality.
 - Integrate an upward extension which is subservient to the existing building;
 - Contribute to a sense of arrival into the town centre without creating a landmark;
 - Incorporate roof profiles which contribute to the existing varied town centre roofscape;
 - Respect the townscape hierarchy established by the Premier Inn; and
 - Retain the green character of Finchampstead Road, identified by WBC as a Green Route Enhancement Area.
- 5.25 In terms of height, the surrounding buildings vary in from 2 to 3 storeys, with the buildings directly across Finchampstead Road being up to 5 storeys. The proposed 1.5 storey extension (resulting in a 3.5 storey building including basement) provides a stepping down in height from west to east. The Sites gradient and densely vegetated western boundary assists in screening the increased height along the Finchampstead frontage with WBC agreeing that increased height in this location was acceptable.
- 5.26 A Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared by Bryant Landscape Planning Ltd. Their assessment concludes in terms of townscape character effects, that following completion of the Proposed Development, there will be minor and neutral effects on the surrounding townscape and no effects

on the Wokingham Conservation Area (noting the proposals will not be visible from the conservation area).

- 5.27 The Proposed Development retains the green frontage to Finchampstead Road and the proposed extension to Ascot House will not appear overly dominant. The massing of Ascot House provides a gradual increase in scale from the lower rise residential form to the east whilst remaining subservient to the larger scale built form to the west, such as the Premier Inn.
- 5.28 The pitched roof profile is considered to complement the existing varied town centre roofscape and the materials palettes complements the materiality and form of the context.
- 5.29 In terms of visual effects, the Proposed Development will be visible in some local views, albeit often screened by intervening tree cover. The proposed extension to Ascot House will be experienced in the context of existing built form. Visual effects will range from moderate and neutral for users of local roads and premises to none.
- 5.30 The proposals utilise the existing building footprint, with the internal layout of the building being strongly informed by ensuring any potential amenity impacts to neighbouring properties (such as privacy or overlooking concerns to neighbouring habitable rooms from windows or balconies) are fully mitigated.
- 5.31 Setbacks are as existing above the existing 1F between the Site and properties to the east along Kendrick Close and we note there are no habitable rooms that directly look over the Site. The rear (southern) extension also maintains separation distances of at least 20m to rear facing habitable rooms in properties along Carey Road, whilst overlooking and privacy concerns to the 2 houses to the west of the Site along Finchampstead Road are mitigated by the fact there are no rear facing habitable rooms directly overlooking the Site.
- 5.32 The materials palette has been identified through a thorough assessment of the local and wider context and looks to blend with the local vernacular but also to provide elements of contrast as a modern insertion. The designs also continue the red and grey handmade brick primary materiality of the consented façade improvements secured under planning permission 211020. The design also includes the use of glass balustrades, aluminium parapets and windows and is considered contextually appropriate given the prevailing character of the area.
- 5.33 The layout and design ensure adequate levels of daylight and sunlight to both the proposed and neighbouring properties (further information is provided within the daylight and sunlight report prepared by Rights of Light Consulting).
- 5.34 The existing strong vegetative buffer maintains and protects much of the building from being viewed from street scene. Additional planting is proposed in the form of feature planting beds and new tree plantings. The hard landscaping areas will be comprised of mostly of tarmac, including permeable paving stones.
- 5.35 Access to the Site is as per existing arrangements. Pavement is maintained along the northern edge of the building, and additional parking is proposed within the existing car park to the rear of the Site, along with 4 x additional

disabled parking bays proposed along Kendrick Close. The access arrangements will ensure that safe access through the Site will be maintained.

- 5.36 Ancillary elements, such as bin and cycle stores have been well considered and will integrate well with the design of the Proposed Development. All piping and drains will be contained within the curtilage of the building.
- 5.37 In summary, the design of the extension is of a high-quality in line with adopted policy and design guidance and responds well to the local character and the host building. The Proposed Development is considered acceptable in policy and design terms.

Residential Mix (incl. Affordable Housing)

- 5.38 The NPPF requires LPAs to deliver a wide choice of high-quality homes and to plan for a mix of housing in terms of size, type, tenure, and range based on local demand (Para 60).
- 5.39 Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy requires an appropriate mix of dwelling types, tenures, and sizes so that the housing needs of the community are met. Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan requires an appropriate housing mix which reflects a balance between the underlying character of the area and both the current and projected needs of households. The supporting text states that *“to sustain mixed communities, developers should bring forward proposals for market housing which reflect the demand and the demographic profile of households requiring market housing.”*
- 5.40 The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (February 2016) is the latest document to identify future housing need for the Wokingham Borough. The need as portrayed within this document is assessed against the housing mix proposed in **Table 4** below.

Unit Type	No. of Units	% of Mix	WBC Desired Mix
1 Bedroom	2	20%	7.2%
2 Bedroom	8	80%	27.1%
3 Bedroom	0	0%	43.5%
4+ Bedroom	0	0%	22.2%
TOTAL	10	100%	100%

Table 4: Proposed Housing Mix

- 5.41 Although not in strict accordance with the SHMA, given the Site’s sustainable location within a town centre with close access to transport, and goods and services, the location is highly suited for providing a mix of 1 and 2 x bed homes

that would provide a range of housing options for singles, couples, people with disabilities, older persons, students, and small families.

- 5.42 On balance, and given the location, the proposed unit mix will increase the number of residents living in the town centre which ensures the vitality and viability of the Wokingham Town Centre. The proposed unit mix is therefore considered acceptable in policy terms.

Affordable Housing

- 5.43 Chapter 5 of the NPPF outlines the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes including the provision of affordable homes. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.
- 5.44 Adopted Core Strategy Policy CP5 outlines the Council's approach to affordable housing. The policy states all residential proposals of between 5 – 14 dwellings (net) or covering a net site area of between least 0.16 – 0.49ha will provide up to 20% of the net additional units proposed as affordable dwellings, where viable. Emerging Policy H5 carries forward the provisions of Core Strategy Policy CP5. We note, the adopted policy is considered out-of-date and not in accordance with the NPPF (para 64) which seeks affordable housing on major applications.
- 5.45 Given the constraints of the Site, WBC officers confirmed as part of their pre-app response that they would be seeking a 20% off-site affordable housing contribution, subject to viability, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CP5.
- 5.46 The applicant has undertaken a financial viability assessment, as produced by tor&co, which is submitted in support of this application. The results demonstrate that the Proposed Development returns a residual land value (RLV) of c.-£190,900. When assessed against the minimum benchmark land value (BLV) of £48,000 this produces a scheme deficit of -£238,929. As the RLV of the Proposed Development is below the BLV, this demonstrates that the scheme is not able to viably provide any financial contributions towards planning gain. As such, the Proposed Development is not able to deliver any financial contributions towards off-site affordable housing.

Residential Quality

- 5.47 The Proposed Development will deliver high quality new homes of an exemplar standard. Planning policy at all levels places great importance on the need for new homes that are of high quality design and highlights the role that this can play in creating successful communities. The NPPF (Para 135) is clear in its support for increasing housing supply should be delivered in tandem with quality. WBC adopted and emerging policy is clear that the policy support for increasing housing supply should be delivered in tandem with quality.
- 5.48 Adopted MDD Policy TB07 outlines internal size requirements, which accord with NDSS standards, and notes that proposals should accord with the Borough Design Guide SPD.

- 5.49 Emerging Policy H3 outlines that all new homes must be M4(2) compliant, meet NDSS internal space standards, and on developments of 20 or more new dwellings must include minimum 6% M4(3) homes.
- 5.50 The Borough Design Guide states: “*R17: All dwellings must provide adequate internal space in an appropriate layout to accommodate a range of lifestyles. Living areas and bedrooms should be large enough to accommodate a range of private and communal activities.*” Such design approaches should include:
- avoiding narrow living rooms;
 - where relevant combined living room/kitchen/diners (LKD’s) as being no less than 23sqm for 2-bedroom units;
 - bedrooms including workspace, built-in storage and well considered window/door locations; and
 - double bedrooms being minimum 12sqm, single bedrooms being minimum 8sqm.
- 5.51 The Proposed Development will create a high-quality environment for future residents of the Site. There are several key attributes of the Proposed Development that help to achieve this:
- All units meet or exceed the WBC/NDSS minimum space standards;
 - All units are designed to meet M4(2) standards;
 - All units are dual aspect;
 - LKD’s all in excess of 23sqm for 2-bed units;
 - Built in storage in all bedrooms and space to locate desks or other hobby space;
 - All units provided are with high-quality private amenity space through balconies;
 - Provides a good level of privacy and avoids overlooking (including design mitigation in strategic locations); and
 - Meets acceptable standards in respect to daylight, sunlight and noise.
- 5.52 As demonstrated by the Design and Access Statement and submitted drawings, the internal layouts provide significant space for future occupiers to achieve multiple arrangements of living and bedrooms, including space to provide study/office spaces, built in storage and private amenity space to all units.
- 5.53 The Proposed Development provides the highest residential quality by meeting policy requirements and in many cases meeting or exceeding the baseline and good practice standards within the WBC Borough Design Guide SPD.

Transport, Access, and Servicing

- 5.54 At all levels within planning policy there is a strong presumption in favour of reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car, and encouraging more sustainable modes of transport.
- 5.55 Core Strategy Policy CP6 'Managing Travel Demand' states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that are located in accessible locations with sustainable travel options, provide appropriate vehicular parking, mitigate any adverse effects upon the local and strategic transport network and enhance safety.
- 5.56 A Transport Statement has been prepared by TTP Consulting Ltd. and submitted as part of this application, which provides a detailed assessment of the relevant planning policy relating to transport and highways matters as detailed further below. In summary, the Proposed Development is sustainably located and designed to maximise the potential for sustainable travel and minimise impacts on the local transport networks and is considered acceptable in highways terms.

Trip Generation

- 5.57 In terms of trip generation, it is expected that 62% of new residents will travel by car (as driver). Therefore, when applied to the proposed 10 x units, the Proposed Development is expected to generate 2 x vehicle arrivals and 7 x vehicle departures over the 3-hours AM period (7.00am-10.00am), and 7 x vehicle arrivals and 4 vehicle departures during the 3-hour PM period (4.00pm-7.00pm). Some additional vehicle activity unrelated to a journey to or from work is also likely during these periods, but overall, the proposed level of vehicle activity will not have a significant impact on the local highway network.

Access and Layout

- 5.58 Pedestrians will access the Site principally by front doors located along the southern pavement along Kendrick Close.
- 5.59 Cyclists will similarly access the Site from Kendrick Close then cycle around the rear of the building to the secure cycle store located along the western boundary of the Site.
- 5.60 Primary vehicular access and egress for the 36 x vehicle parking spaces is taken from the Kendrick Close via the existing dropped kerb at the Finchampstead roundabout.

Car and Cycle Parking

- 5.61 Paragraph 114 of the NPPF highlights that in assessing sites, LPAs should ensure appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location. Paragraph 115 further states that development should only be prevented or refused where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or if residual impacts on the road network would be severe.

- 5.62 Core Strategy Policy CP6 states that planning permission will be granted for developments that *“provide appropriate vehicular parking, having regard to car ownership.”*
- 5.63 MDD Policy CC07 further references parking standards within Appendix 2 of the document and recognises that flexibility will be applied to given developments in locations with good transport facilities and infrastructure to serve it. Appendix 2 further highlights that the parking standards will be the starting point in discussions with the Council and that each proposal should be assessed on its own merits.
- 5.64 The Wokingham Town Centre SPD also references that new housing developments in sustainable locations with access to average or better public transport services, will be expected to provide less than the maximum allowances.
- 5.65 Based on the Council's parking calculator, it is suggested the parking requirement for this Site would require 34 x car parking spaces. The Proposed Development provides 36 x car parking spaces, which represents a 1.06 parking space ratio, therefore exceeding policy requirements. A total of 4 x of these spaces will be blue badge accessible spaces. It is also relevant to consider the expected level of car ownership for the development and car ownership data for flats in the local ward from the 2011 Census has been examined. This identifies an average car ownership of 0.71 cars for flats with 1-3 habitable rooms for the immediate area. Therefore, we would expect parking provision to exceed demand from a flatted development.
- 5.66 In terms of Electric Vehicle Parking, electric vehicle charging points associated with the new flats will be installed in accordance with the relevant requirements of Building Regulations Part S, as approved June 2022. Where EV charging capability is being provided it will be in the form of a 7kW Type 2 charging unit. Passive provision is assumed to refer to the installation of the ducting runs that will allow additional EV charging units to be connected at a later date.
- 5.67 Cycle parking will be provided in excess of policy requirements of 1 x space per unit with a total of 62 x long-stay residential cycle parking spaces being provided for the 34 x total units. A Josta 2 Tier secure and covered cycle store will be implemented to accommodate the bicycles.

Service & Refuse

- 5.68 An existing refuse store is located along the northern boundary of the Site with direct access out to Kendrick Close. The existing waste store will accommodate a total of 3 x 1100L general waste bins and 21 x 240L blue recycle wheelie bins. This provision is intended for Ascot House as a whole and is in accordance with the Waste Management Facilities in New Developments guidance note for developers (August 2023).
- 5.69 Refuse will be collected by the Council with vehicles stopping as per the existing arrangement for the Site and the adjacent property.
- 5.70 The accompanying Transport Statement estimates the additional 10 dwellings are expected to result in a further 5-10 delivery vehicles attending the Site per week. It is expected that 80% would be made by light goods vehicles and 20%

by heavy goods vehicles. Access and egress will remain as per the existing condition.

Technical Matters

Daylight, Sunlight & Overshadowing

- 5.71 The BRE numerical guidelines should be considered in the context of the NPPF, which stipulates that local planning authorities should take a flexible approach to daylight and sunlight to ensure the efficient use of land. The NPPF (Para 129) states:
- “c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards).”*
- 5.72 WBC does not appear to have an adopted policy requiring daylight and sunlight assessments to be undertaken, but the WBC Borough Design Guide does reference that amenity associated to daylight and sunlight impacts should be assessed.
- 5.73 Draft Policy DH2 Part 1(b) requires daylight and sunlight and overshadowing impacts to be assessed. The supporting text to the policy advises that protecting amenity helps to protect the wellbeing of the borough’s residents. It is important to ensure that developments do not significantly overshadow neighbouring buildings, block daylight, reduce sunlight or result in a loss of privacy or outlook or increase a sense of enclosure.
- 5.74 A Daylight and Sunlight report (both neighbouring and within) have been prepared by Right of Light Consulting Ltd and submitted as part of this application which provides a detailed assessment of the Proposed Development and any potential impacts on the light receivable by the neighbouring residential properties at 1, 3 & 5 Carey Road, 1 to 7 Kendrick Close, 2, 4 & 6 Norton Road, 36 to 38 & 44 Finchampstead Road, 74 Denmark Street, and the existing properties within Ascot House.
- 5.75 The results show that all assessed windows pass the Vertical Sky Component test, except windows 160, 193 & 213 at Ascot House. Window 160 serves a bedroom, with BRE guidance stating that lighting in bedrooms is less important in comparison to living rooms and kitchens as they are unlikely to be used in the daytime. Although a higher percentage of light is lost from windows 193 and 213, they both still maintain a Vertical Sky Component score of above 20% which is still considered reasonably good in terms of lighting, particularly in higher density town centre locations such as the Site.
- 5.76 In terms of sunlight to windows, window 180 of Ascot House fails to pass the Annual Probable Sunlight Hours test marginally by 0.07. This failure is not considered significant as it only just faces within 90 degrees of due south and does not benefit from an ideal southerly aspect. Had the window not faced within 90 degrees of due south, it would not be required to be tested for direct sunlight under the BRE guidelines. Furthermore, in urban locations it is very often not possible to achieve recommended levels of direct sunlight.

- 5.77 There are no gardens or open spaces which are negatively impacted by overshadowing as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 5.78 In terms of lighting levels for the proposed units, the results demonstrate that that 88% of all habitable rooms meet or surpass the BRE recommendations which is considered high for a urban location. The units which did not meet these standards have access to private outdoor amenity which limits the amount of light reaching the units, however the provision of this is considered to outweigh the minor failing in internal lighting levels.
- 5.79 The results further show that only one proposed private amenity space fails to achieve the BRE target by 1%. As this is significantly minor, it is considered the private amenity space is still useable and value to future occupants.
- 5.80 Overall, based on the minor non-compliance with BRE guidelines on neighbouring properties for only four windows, it is considered the high level of compliance on the rest of the neighbouring properties is acceptable and the Proposed Development safeguards the daylight and sunlight amenity of the neighbouring properties. The internal and external lighting levels for the proposed units also provide good levels of lighting particularly considering the Sites town centre, urban location.

Energy and Sustainability

- 5.81 Paragraphs 157-158 of the NPPF underpin the Government's priority in delivering sustainable low-carbon development. In line with the NPPF, development proposals are expected to comply with local requirements and should take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption and to increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy.
- 5.82 Core Strategy Policy CP1 states that development proposals must contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon developments by including appropriate on-site renewable energy features, and minimising energy and water consumption through strategic design. The supporting text also references a target to deliver development that accords with building regulations and the now obsolete Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 5.83 MDD Policy CC04 stipulates that all homes must achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 (noting this is no longer applicable), meet internal potable water consumption of 105L or less per day per person. MD Policy CC05 further states that development must achieve a 10% reduction in CO2 emissions through renewable energy or low-carbon technology, where schemes are in excess of 10 units.
- 5.84 Draft Policy DH7 states that proposals will be supported where they implement the Energy Hierarchy by prioritising a fabric first approach and passive design, demonstrate a reduction in on-site energy demand and maximise the use of low carbon energy sources, maximise opportunity to connect to low carbon energy networks, embrace innovative sustainable design solutions, and where appropriate integrate solar gain, natural ventilation, fabric performance into the layout and design. Furthermore, the policy supports developments which result in considerable improvements to the energy efficiency, carbon emissions and longevity of existing buildings, including through sensitive retrofitting.

- 5.85 An Energy & Sustainability Statement has been produced by JS Lewis Ltd. and submitted in support of this application. It details the Site is not located within a Heat Priority Network and that an overall carbon reduction of 52% has been achieved, with 35% from renewable energy measures (i.e. hot water heat pumps and PV panels) and 17% from energy demand reduction measures.
- 5.86 Furthermore, the Sustainability Strategy sets out that reducing water consumption below 105L/person/day will be achieved by fitting out the building with high efficiency fittings.
- 5.87 As such, the Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with all levels of policy. Further details are set out in the submitted Energy & Sustainability Statement.

Ecology, Arboricultural & Landscaping

- 5.88 The NPPF (Para 180) states: *“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*
- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
 - b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
 - c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁶⁷ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*
 - d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.”*
- 5.89 NPPF Paragraph 136 acknowledges that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environment, and existing trees on sites should be retained where possible.
- 5.90 Core Strategy Policy CP3 requires that development does not result in any detrimental impact upon important ecological features.
- 5.91 Draft Policy NE4 seeks to ensure that all trees that may be affected be assessed in terms of their health and value, and where pertinent ensure existing and proposed trees are provided sufficient space to grow and be

protected. Draft Policy NE5 further notes that development proposals should respect, conserve, and enhance the distinctiveness of the local landscape by adopting a landscape led approach that incorporates suitable landscape strategies and protects valued landscape assets where appropriate.

- 5.92 The submission is supported by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, and an outline Landscape Strategy, all prepared by Lizard Design and Ecology.
- 5.93 The Proposed Development retains all trees abutting the Site on the western boundary which is in accordance with local policy and pre-application advice. Further hard and soft landscaping enhancements are proposed, including:
- Additional feature planting beds;
 - Native tree planting;
 - Raised storm planters; and
 - Permeable paving.
- 5.94 Overall, the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment concludes that these features will result in a net gain of 11.53% which exceeds the recently updated legislation requiring minimum 10% BNG uplift from development proposals.

Flood Risk & Drainage

- 5.95 Core Strategy Policy CP1 highlights that proposals should avoid increasing risks of or from all forms of flooding (including groundwater).
- 5.96 MDD Policy CC09 states that all forms of flood risk must be assessed and that development be guided to areas with the lowest flood risk from all sources. The Site is situated in the Environment Agency's flood zone 1, with a very low risk of pluvial flooding. The Site is therefore not likely to be subjected to the fluvial or pluvial flooding up to a 1:1000 year plus climate change flood event. The risk of flooding from all sources has been determined to be low or very low, therefore no flood protection measures are required.
- 5.97 The pre-application response from WBC further confirms that "*considering there are no changes to footprint, and thus impermeable area, the proposal represents no additional flood risk or vulnerability.*"
- 5.98 A Drainage Strategy has been prepared by PRP Environmental and submitted in support of this application. The Report highlights that Thames Water asset records show a public sewer crossing the Site within the existing hardstanding to the south of the building. A drainage survey was undertaken which showed several existing surface water connections from the roof and hardstanding into this public sewer. The drainage survey also found a surface water drainage system to the north of the building within the access of Kendrick Close. This received discharge from the access road and the rainwater downpipes serving the northern extremity of the building. A foul drainage system was found which discharges westwards into a Thames Water manhole within Finchampstead Road.

- 5.99 The existing drainage layout on the Site, along with the connections to adjacent areas, doesn't allow for the implementation of cellular attenuation or improvement of surface water discharge rates at ground level. Limited space and existing sub-surface infrastructure makes it impossible to construct cellular attenuation, and restricting flows within the Site may cause flooding in neighbouring land parcels. Most of the existing car park and access roadway will remain unchanged, and the congested drainage system offers little opportunity for surface water runoff treatment at ground level.
- 5.100 Notwithstanding, the proposal includes installing type C permeable paving in some parking areas and constructing a raised storm planter at the front of the property. These features will provide storage and treatment for surface water runoff. These features result in a 41% betterment during a 1 in 100 year storm event plus 40% climate change scenario.

Construction Method

- 5.101 Local Plan Policy CC04 outlines the requirement for developments to be built sustainability in terms of design and construction. The WBC Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (May 2010) provides further guidance in relation to recycling and reusing construction materials, locally sourced materials, construction pollution, and minimising the negative impacts of construction on local residents and the environment which has been carefully considered.
- 5.102 PRP Surveying have prepared a Construction Method Statement outlining the developments adherence to policy and guidance, along with ensuring there is minimal impact on the existing residents within Ascot House.
- 5.103 The construction period is anticipated to last 9 months, with works restricted to between the hours of 8am to 6pm on Monday to Friday and between 8am and 1pm on Saturdays. There will also be a 24-hour contact number displayed on site to enable residents or members of the public to advise of any issues that they may have during the works.
- 5.104 Construction vehicles will access the site from Kendrick Close with access controlled through use of a lockable double gate. The construction compound will be located to the southwest of the site, which is considered to be the most appropriate and discrete location, minimising impacts on the remainder of the site and surrounding area. The compound will accommodate a waste and storage area, canteen / WC, site office and loading area. This will be secured using closed board timber hoarding, preventing unauthorised access. An extract of the construction site set up plan is shown in Figure 2.

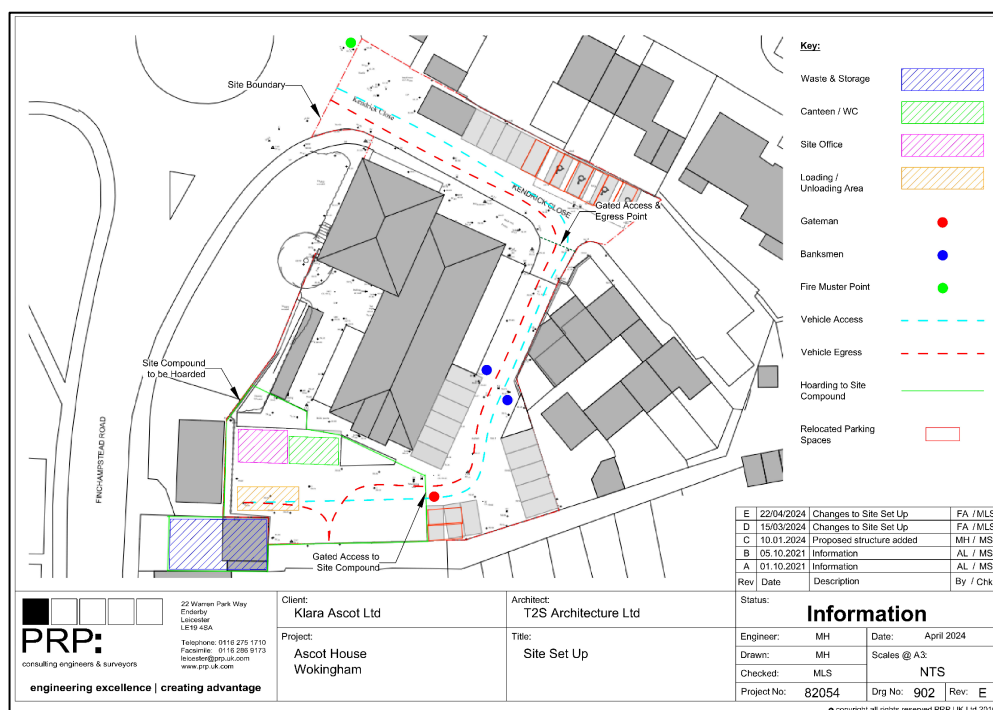


Figure 2: Construction Site Set up Plan

5.105 The Applicant recognises the importance of maintaining existing vehicular and pedestrian access to the site. The front access will remain as existing, and the apartments that are accessed from the rear will be provided with a resident / visitor specific walkway which will be hoarded and provided with lighting, enhancing safety. In terms of parking, there will be a minor reconfiguration of the existing parking layout to accommodate the construction pound, however all 24 x car parking spaces allocated to Ascot House residents will remain throughout the construction period.

5.106 The accompanying Construction Method Statement commits to the following construction methods in line with the WBC Sustainable Design and Construction SPD:

- A minimum target of 25% of materials used during the construction to be reclaimed or recycled materials;
- Encouraging on-site recycling and where possible composting waste;
- Recycling waste that is unable to be repurposed;
- Sourcing responsible and recycled materials from within a 35 mile radius of the site;
- Outlining a site waste and environmental management plan which adopts best practice techniques to minimise dust, dirt, and noise during construction;
- Being part of the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

5.107 Overall, the proposed construction methods are considered to be sustainable and considerate, adhering to local policy and guidance.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 This Planning Statement summarises details of the Proposed Development and assesses it against applicable national and local planning policies and guidance. It sets out the key planning issues and material considerations that arise within this context and concludes that the proposals are in accordance with the objectives of national and local planning policies to deliver sustainable development.
- 6.2 The principle of residential development within the town centre is supported within local policy, and the Site is within a highly sustainable location within proximity to an abundance of shops and services to support this use. The provision of 10 x units will contribute towards WBC housing targets and is a significant public benefit given the Council cannot demonstrate a four-year housing land supply and the NPPF's 'tilted balance' being engaged.
- 6.3 The design of the extension has been given thorough consideration and has been shaped through pre-application engagement with WBC. The Proposed Development would deliver a strategically designed and modest 1.5-2.5 storey extension to bring the total building height to 3.5 storey. The design strategy ensures the Proposed Development will allow the building to adapt in height across the Site to integrate with, respect and enhance the surrounding character of the area.
- 6.4 The layout considerations prioritise privacy and avoid overlooking neighbouring properties through the use of setbacks, separation distances and appropriate screening features. The chosen materials complement the local context and host building while incorporating modern elements.
- 6.5 All units are designed to a high quality, meeting internal and external spaces standards and being dual aspect. Daylight and sunlight impacts are in accordance with BRE Guidance and there is no significant impact in terms of privacy, overlooking and overshadowing to neighbouring properties.
- 6.6 A policy compliant level of car and cycle parking is proposed, along with soft and hard landscaping improvements enhancing the biodiversity and quality of the Site.
- 6.7 Along with the package of information submitted in support of this application it has been demonstrated that proposals are acceptable in development management terms and raise no policy conflicts. The Proposed Development is in accordance with the NPPF and WBC's Development Plan and therefore should be approved without delay.