

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251526
Site Address:	Central Square Reading, University Of Reading, Earley, Reading, Berkshire
Expiry Date:	25 August 2025
Site Visit Date:	15 July 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a cycle store following demolition of existing cycle store plus relocation of existing bin store.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Earley
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone – Red Risk Zone
Local Historic Park and Garden – Whiteknights Park, Earley
Core Employment Area – Whiteknights Park, Earley

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability

	CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP15 – Core Employment Areas
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB11 – Core Employment Areas TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets TB26 – Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS9 – Whiteknights Campus SS17 – Transport improvements CE7 – Low carbon and renewable energy generation C1 – Active and sustainable transport and accessibility C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design C3 – Active travel C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging ER1 – Core Employment Areas FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE2 – Biodiversity net gain

	NE4 – Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows NE5 – Landscape and design
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

The Whiteknights Campus/University of Reading has an extensive planning history, however none of it is considered relevant to the development proposals.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No objections
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection subject to condition(s)
WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objections
WBC Ecology Newts – No objections
WBC Ecology – No comments received
WBC Waste Services – No comments received

External

Berkshire Gardens Trust – No comments received
The Garden Trust – No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objections
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a small area of both cycle parking, bin storage and amenity landscaping within the centre of Whiteknights Campus, Earley.

Proposal Description:

This application seeks approval for the proposed erection of a replacement cycle storage store following demolition of the existing cycle store and relocation of the existing bin store.

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.

Character of the Area/Heritage:

The proposed cycle store would have predominantly glazed elevations, with the exception of vertical timber cladding placed on the rear (north-eastern) elevation. It would have a flat roof with a height of 2.3 metres and would be sited on a very similar footprint to the existing cycle store with the exception of an increase in depth northwards, resulting in the loss of a small area of grassland.

The relocated bin store would be relocated adjacent to the eastern elevation of the cycle store, when in comparison it is to the west of the existing cycle store currently.

Overall, both the Case and Built Heritage Officers concur that the new cycle store would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area and the Whiteknights Park Local Historic Park and Garden; the location of the store is within a grouping of modern buildings in the University campus, such that the replacement will have no effect on the setting of the listed buildings within Whiteknights Park, nor the prevailing character of the landscape.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Due to the nature of the proposals and their location adjacent to educational/commercial buildings, there are no neighbouring amenity concerns.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

WBC Highways welcome the provision of additional secure cycle storage within the University campus, which will encourage sustainable travel. The location of the cycle store is similar to existing and considered acceptable.

Flooding and Drainage:

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and the proposals represent no additional flood risk.

Landscape and Trees:

The proposals result in the loss of a minor area of landscaped amenity land, but it would have no notable impact on the landscape character.

Similarly, WBC Landscape and Trees have reviewed the Arboricultural Report (Chalice Consulting Ltd dated 28th May 2025) and raise no concerns on arboricultural grounds. Subject to compliance with the report, there are no objections.

Ecology:

The site is located within a Red Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts. Despite this, the very limited scale of the proposed development is unlikely to harm this protected species. An informative will be placed on the decision notice as a precaution if approved.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

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

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

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

The habitat baseline for the existing site is 0.01 habitat units. The number of units required to achieve a 10% gain would be 0.02 habitat units. As the University of Reading's land ownership around the application red line is substantial, it is the applicant's intention to provide the required net gains through on-site planting.

The LPA consider that an S106 legal agreement to securing LPA monitoring of the gains over a thirty year period is not necessary for the very minor scale of this development. Instead, final details will be secured via the Biodiversity Net Gain Plan, automatically applied to the permission if approved.

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.

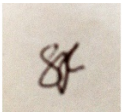
Conclusion:

Overall, the proposed development complies with the development plan and raises no concerns on any other material planning grounds. Subject to conditions, this application is recommended for approval.

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:	Approval
Date:	24 July 2025
Earliest date for decision:	22 July 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	25.7.25