

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	241915
Site Address:	Waitrose Ltd, Rectory Road, Wokingham, RG40 1BB
Expiry Date:	29 October 2024
Site Visit Date:	24/05/2024
Proposal: Full application for proposed works to the car park boundary wall (Wall H1) including installation of 3 no. buttresses and a supporting wall, and restoration where necessary.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Conservation Area – Wokingham Town Centre
- Archaeological Sites
- Scale and Location of Development Proposals
- Landscape Character Assessment Area

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC07 – Parking TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
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222748	Application for Listed Building consent for proposed reconstruction and restoration works to car park boundary walls, with associated landscaping.	Approval, 10/08/2023
233120	Application for Listed Building consent for proposed reconstruction and restoration works to car park boundary walls, with associated landscaping.	Refused, 06/04/2024
241916	Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed works to the car park boundary wall (Wall H1) including installation of 3 no. buttresses and a supporting wall, and restoration where necessary.	Awaiting decision.
241565	Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed restoration works to car park boundary wall, with associated landscaping.	Awaiting decision.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No objections.

WBC Landscape and Trees – No objections.

WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objections, subject to conditions.

External

Historic England

Berkshire Archaeology

REPRESENTATIONS

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

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site lies within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area, towards the edge of the conservation area, the boundary to which follows Rectory Road that lies adjacent the application site the north-eastern boundary of which correlates with the line of the conservation area's eastern boundary.

The application site is the customer surface car park to the Waitrose supermarket, a back land development that occurred in the latter part of the 1990s that along with the grounds to subsequently demolished two properties on Rectory Road had comprised of the rear gardens and grounds to a number of the properties fronting Broad Street and Rose Street.

In forming the surface car park, a number of the previously existing brick boundary walls have been retained, the majority of which appear to be 19th century (or earlier), with others being early 20th century in date. A number of the walls seemingly

associated originally with the grade II* listed Montague House, from the grounds to the rear of which a substantial portion of the land now forming the Waitrose car park.

Proposed development:

This application is the latest of several for reconstruction and restoration works to car park boundary walls of Waitrose. Listed Building Consent has previously been given in August 2023, under 222748. The consented scheme of rebuilding and repairs to eight sections of boundary walls surrounding the car park of Waitrose was the result of several months of discussions and resulting amendments to proposals that would be a more acceptable compromise between minimising the loss of the original brick walling to retain its historic significance and appearance, whilst addressing the issue of ensuring it is structurally safe and of no risk to the public

A follow-up listed-building consent application under 233120 was submitted in January 2024, which sort additional reconstruction and restoration works to two boundary walls, namely Wall H1 and Wall H2. The application was refused, broadly on the grounds that the proposed reconstruction and restoration works to the car park boundary walls would have caused harm to the designated heritage asset due to the loss of historic fabric, for which no clear and convincing justification was provided.

This planning application and accompanying listed-building consent application now seeks revised works to Wall H1 only and proposes the installation of 3no. buttresses and 1no. full height brick wall along the south-eastern side of the wall designed to support the leaning side of the structure.

A separate listed building consent application under 241565 has been submitted for revised works to Wall H2 and is currently awaiting determination.

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:

The proposal seeks the installation of 3no. buttresses and 1no. full height brick wall along the south-eastern side of the wall designed to support the leaning side of the structure (wall H1). These are considered to represent minor alterations. The buttresses, located on the south-eastern side within a private, enclosed neighbouring car park, would not be visible from any public vantage points. Overall, the proposals do not have any discernible visual impact on the character of the area or the conservation area and would not cause harm to the setting of the surrounding listed buildings and assets.

Impact on Built Heritage:

Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan requires that works affecting the setting of heritage assets at least conserve and where possible enhance the important character of the heritage assets. The policy further adds that 'proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme'

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (whether through alteration, destruction, or development within its setting) must be clearly and convincingly justified. This includes substantial harm to, or loss of, Grade II listed buildings. As per (section 1(5) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) a listed building also includes any ancillary object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July, 1948.

Paragraph 208 of the NPPF highlights that when a development proposal results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where applicable, securing its optimum viable use.

The Council's Heritage Officer has reviewed this application and has stated the following:

The 24.75-meter length of 3.4-meter-tall historic brick wall, referred to as Wall H1, represents the remaining north-easterly section of an 18th-century garden boundary wall that extends south-west to join Montague House. The section of walling extending back from Wall H1, referred to as Wall H2, similarly forms part of the boundary of the Waitrose car park, with the rear beer garden of the Broad Street Tavern lying on the opposite side. Both parts of this historic former garden boundary wall (Walls H1 & H2) are part of the Grade II* listing of Montague House. While no longer under Montague House's ownership, as it is now part of Waitrose, this boundary walling is still considered a listed structure.

Both sections of the listed boundary wall require partial rebuilding of their upper brick courses, as well as repointing in certain areas. Currently, Wall H2 is the subject of a separate concurrent application for listed building consent under 241565, focused on its repair and partial rebuild (top courses of brickwork).

In the case of the proposed works on the H1 section of the wall, its more severe condition—specifically, the serious lean at its north-eastern end—puts it at significant risk of collapse. In 2022, listed building consent was granted to dismantle and rebuild several meters of the north-eastern end of the wall with new foundations, along with the addition of several small buttresses on the Waitrose side. However, after this consent was granted, the applicant sought to dismantle and rebuild a much larger portion of the wall, which was not acceptable from a heritage perspective.

Subsequent discussions between the applicant, their agents, and the Council

have led to a proposal that retains the entire length of Wall H1 in situ, allowing for repairs (including repointing and reinstatement of missing brickwork at the top) and the addition of three brick-built compression buttresses on the Gatehouse side. These buttresses will be keyed into the wall, along with a supporting end wall return at the north-eastern terminal to stabilize the lean and prevent further outward movement.

From a heritage standpoint, this proposal is highly favorable, as it preserves the original historic boundary wall, addresses necessary repairs, and mitigates the risk of collapse. The use of compression buttresses is a traditional, proven method for stabilizing leaning boundary walls. Consequently, Built Heritage fully supports the proposed works. However, there is some concern that damage or even collapse could occur if the structure is not adequately supported and protected during the work. The single-skinned bricked-up arched opening in particular requires careful attention. Therefore, additional details on how the wall will be temporarily supported and protected during the work should be requested.

Suitable conditions, securing these details will be attached to any approval.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Due to the modest nature and location of the proposals, well away from any residential property, there are no loss of light, overlooking or overbearing concerns.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed this application and considers that the works will not affect the numbers of existing parking spaces and will have no works on public highway. As such, no objections are raised on Highways grounds.

Landscape and Trees:

The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed this application and raises no objection to the proposed safety works to Wall H1 as outlined in the covering letter. Trees T2 & T3 which were shown to be removed as part of the previous application (233120), will now be retained as the restoration works will be undertaken from the rear of the wall.

Archaeology

An Archaeology Officer on behalf of Berkshire Archaeology has reviewed this application and considers that the minor works to the wall will not have ground impact, therefore, this application will not require any archaeological mitigation.

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:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	25 October 2024
Earliest date for decision:	19 September 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	29.10.2024