



Daniel Washington C2010
Designing Out Crime Officer

Thames Valley Police
Headquarters South
Oxford Road
Kidlington
OX5 2NX

09 April 2025

Reference: 250148

Location: Liberty House Strand Way Earley Wokingham RG6 4EA

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for consulting Thames Valley Police in relation to the above planning application. I have reviewed the submitted documents and crime statistics for the area and the following comments are provided to ensure the application meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF), which states:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible... and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience" (Paragraph 135(f), NPPF).

It is noted that the application is essentially a resubmission of a previously approved scheme that was granted in June 2022 (application reference 213457). Thames Valley Police raised concerns with a number of aspects of the design of that application which were only partially addressed through the addition of a number of conditions attached to the permission. The issues highlighted previously remain a concern. I therefore reiterate the concerns raised and request that they are addressed through the submission of revised plans prior to the determination of the application.

Access from Cutbush Lane and demarcation of public/private space

Access is proposed into the development from Cutbush Lane (a cycle route/footpath) to the south. If this is to be provided, this needs to be a secure (lockable), gated entrance, with only residents of the apartments having access. Without any gates, the route would be available for use by the general public, diluting and blurring the lines between public and private space, and reducing the defensible space for the apartments.

Generally, there is a lack of a clear definition of public and private space for the development, with the site very open in nature. There does not appear to be any perimeter security for the development and the site appears to be permeable (including footpaths into Liberty House), with no clear, secure private amenity space provided for the apartments.

There should be a clear demarcation of public and private space, through the use of appropriate boundary treatments and defensive planting.

Location of Bike Store

The bike store is located some distance from the residential block which is likely to impact the level of surveillance available to deter those intent on crime and anti-social behaviour. This issue is exacerbated by its position close to the entrance from Cutbush Lane, which would allow an offender a route to and from the development without being observed.

No details have been provided with regards to the security of the store. Ultimately, if occupants do not deem this store to be a safe place to enter and store their bikes then legitimate usage will wain and the potential for antisocial behaviour in this location will increase.

The bike store should be located where there is a high level of surveillance available to it from the development, creating an obvious feeling of ownership to the store. One entrance/exit should be present via a single wide door meeting (as a minimum) the standards of PAS24:2022. As this single store is proposed to serve all 18 units it would be appropriate for electronic fob access to be provided allowing for self-closing hinges and locking mechanisms to be fitted preventing them from being left insecure.

It is noted that the previous planning permission (213457) included a condition in relation to the bike store location and security. If revised information is not submitted prior to the determination of the application, it is requested that similar conditions are added to any new permission.

Entrances to Apartment Buildings

No active windows oversee the entrances which are located on the side elevations. First floor kitchen windows are shown fitted with frosted glass on western elevations, therefore providing no surveillance potential. On the eastern elevation bedroom windows are present on the first floor, however these are likely to have curtains and blinds drawn when occupied whilst the door canopy hinders any line of sight to the doors. This lack of visibility is compounded by the presence of covered walkways, which not only further limit potential overlooking, but also could provide locations for inappropriate loitering or antisocial behaviour, particularly given the open nature of the site (as per comments above in relation to demarcation of public/private space)

The internal layout of the apartments should be revised to provide active surveillance of the entrances from the residents of the scheme. The covered walkways should be removed.

Apartment Access Strategy

Unrestricted access via a trades button or timed release should not be present as both fundamentally undermine the security provided to a development. The communal hallway and stairwell should only be accessible to residents and their guests, therefore a visitor entry system will need to be present. This may mean that residents are required to meet and greet a guest at the communal entrance but there should be a visitor connection to each of the first floor flats. Similarly postal deliveries also need to be considered and it would be appropriate for external letter boxes to be provided. Again it is not appropriate for access to be permitted into the communal corridors for postal/courier services to complete through the door deliveries for the first floor apartments.

It is noted that a building security condition was added to the previous permission for the site and this should be added to any new permission.

As a general point, and for any future specification for the development, I would recommend the applicant consults the guidance provided by Secured by Design Residential Guide 2025.

The above comments are made on behalf of Thames Valley Police and relate to designing out crime only. I hope that you find these comments of assistance. If you have any queries relating to crime prevention design, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Dan Washington | Designing Out Crime Officer