SYSTEMS LTD

SOUTHPORT U.K. Tel.0704-26866 Fax.0704-25814
LONDON OFFICE Tel.071-377-1777 Fax.071-247-6181

APPLICATION NO:
O/2000/1714

LOCATION:
Training College Meteorological Office Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield Reading.

APPLICANT:
Ministry Of Defence C/O Barton Wilmore Planning

PROPOSAL:
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

EARLIEST DATE FOR DECISION: **14/07/2000**

APPLICATION WILL HAVE EXPIRED ON: 04/08/2000

CASE OFFICER: **Angela Odell**

Tel. 0118 974 6445 (Direct Line)
E-mail: Angela.Odell@wokingham.gov.uk
Date. 10 January, 2001
My ref. AO/O/2000/1714

The theatres trust
22 Charing Cross Road
LONDON WC2H 0QL

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 977 8909
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Ms Croft

OUTLINE APPLICATION NO. O/2000/1714 FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF HEADQUARTERS AND ANCILLARY BUILDINGS (TOTAL FLOORSPACE 37,160 SQ M APPROX.) WITH ASSOCIATED DECKED CAR PARKING FOR USE BY METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE AT SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

Thank you for your letter of 20 December. I apologise for not consulting you about the above application, but I was not aware of the requirement to do so. I advise you that the Council's Development Control Committee on 6.9.00 resolved to raise no objection in principle to the proposal, but expressed various concerns. These included the need for a satisfactory solution for accommodation for the Shinfield Players.

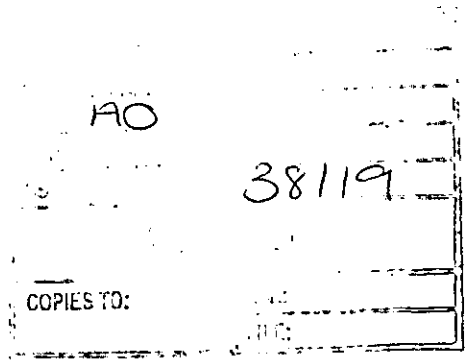
However, it now appears that the Met. Office is likely to relocate to Exeter instead and therefore it appears unlikely that the above proposal will be implemented. If the Shinfield Players are still on the site when any subsequent applications are submitted, I will ensure you are consulted in future.

I trust the above is clear, but if you wish to discuss the matter further please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Ao

MRS A ODELL
Senior Planner

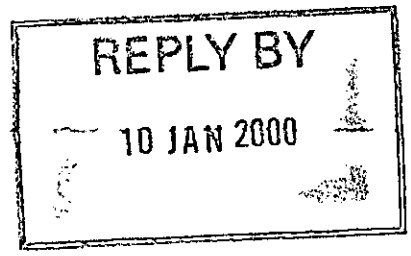


The Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road
London WC2H 0QL
Telephone: (020) 7836 8591
Facsimile: (020) 7836 3302
info@theatrestrust.org.uk

Director: Peter Longman

20 December 2000



Ms. Anna Cronin,
Chief Planning Officer
Wokingham District Council,
Council Offices,
Shute End,
Wokingham RG40 1BN

Dear Ms.Cronin,

Reading: Shinfield Players Theatre, Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane

I understand that proposals are being developed for the demolition of *The Shinfield Players Theatre* and the redevelopment of the site.

I am writing to remind you of your statutory duty to consult the theatres trust on any proposals which affect land on which there is a theatre (I enclose a leaflet explaining this, and one giving more general information about the work of the Trust).

We would strongly object to the loss of this valuable resource. The theatre is obviously a lively and flourishing venue and, although the building itself is relatively modest, it provides very good facilities for amateur production, far better than many other theatres of its type. The social and cultural benefits that the building brings to the area are considerable.

We would be grateful if you could send us details of your development plan polices which would effect decision making on this site, in advance of the lodging of an application.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Croft.

Catherine Croft
Architecture and Planning Adviser

Encs.

☆ D:\Admin\OFFICE\LETTERS\shinfield.wpd

Established by Act of Parliament to promote the better protection of theatres

Life President: Lord Jenkins of Putney Consultant: John Earl

TRUSTEES:
Chairman: Sir John Drummond CBE
Yvonne Brewster OBE
David Brierley CBE
Axel Burrough
Martyn Heighton
Paul Iles
Jonathan Lane
John Muir
Anne Riches OBE
Dr Phyllis Starkey MP
Pat Thomas
Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen Bt

The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with The Theatres Trust has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under no. 274697

No.2 WHAT IS A THEATRE?

The Theatres Trust*

Introduction

The Theatres Trust was created to protect theatres as a national resource and that intention has been reinforced by a number of subsequent official provisions. Among the most significant activities of the Trust is that of making representations to local authorities about theatres. On the face of it what constitutes a theatre might seem to be self-evident but experience has shown there are occasions when it is not at all clear whether a particular building is a theatre within the meaning of the relevant legislation.

Local authorities are required to consult the Trust before determining a planning application affecting "land on which there is a theatre". This requirement is contained in General Development Orders made by the Secretary of State for the Environment since the earliest days of the Trust's existence. Our Advice Note No1 sets out the current references for England and Wales, and Scotland.

The Term 'consult' implies a two-way process, requiring more than the issue of a notice. The Trust must be given sufficient information to enable it to fulfil its duty of consultation.

The Order refers to the *planning application* (which may concern several acres of land) and not just to the theatre itself. Consultation over a whole development can be of great importance where a major city centre project threatens to leave a theatre isolated between, say, a faceless multi-storey car park and a traffic interchange. Moreover, the Order does not merely refer to theatres in use. It embraces all theatres whether old, new, listed, unlisted, active, dark or misused.

But what, exactly, is meant by "a theatre"?

The General Development Order refers to the Theatres Trust Act 1976, which defines a theatre as "any building or part of a building constructed wholly or mainly for the public performance of plays" - and it is the Trust's opinion that a building which has undergone major adaptation to turn it into a theatre is "constructed" for that purpose.

But, then, what is a play?

The Theatres Trust Act gives "plays" the same meaning as in the Theatres Act 1968, which defines "play" as: (a) Any dramatic piece ...given ... by one or more persons actually present and performing and in which ... what is done ... whether by way of speech, singing or acting involves the playing of a role, and (b) A ballet ... whether or not it falls within (a).

There is a broad definition embracing grand opera through to solo comedians. This scope becomes significant when looking at the many cine theatres built in the first third of this century, designed for both film and variety entertainment, sometimes on a quite spectacular scale.

If there be doubt about the word "mainly" in "wholly or mainly for the public performance of plays" it is useful to look at the original intention of the Theatres Trust Act - the perceived need to protect theatres as a national resource. Ciné theatres, as a building type, come in a wide range of ciné/theatre mixes. If it was clearly the intention of the design that the building should be equally usable as cinema or theatre, then the Trust believes the benefit of the doubt should be on the side of its theatre potential. If there is a known record of live performance use, combined with a good stage (especially if there is a proper flytower and dressing rooms) the Trust would expect to be consulted as a matter of course, for such a building would have all the essential attributes of a theatre, including appropriate use.

What about theatres embedded in Arts Centres?

With these the Trust feels proper attribution to be a matter of fact and degree. There are some such spaces, whose setting is irrelevant to the argument. They are clearly excellent, purpose-designed theatres even though they may occasionally serve non-theatre purposes. Others, however, are really no more than halls, poorly adapted for theatre use having been designed with altogether too many other uses in view - function room, meeting room, health club, exhibition space or dance hall. Nevertheless, such halls may be all that exists in the way of a performance space for many miles around and the Trust will always offer views in these cases, if invited to do so.

And private theatres?

They are not, strictly, covered by the consultation requirement unless used consistently for the **public** performance of plays - but private theatres can be both valuable and vulnerable cultural assets and authorities would be well advised to seek the Trust's views informally where cases arise.

Change of Use

The definition of 'theatre' is important from another viewpoint. Theatres in use as such, are *sui generis* under the General Development Order 1988, which means that *any* change of use requires

planning permission. It is for the relevant local planning authority to determine if and when a proposal involves a change of use. They will take into account such factors as the nature and the duration of the use and whether it is ancillary to theatre use or a new activity altogether.

The Theatres Trust would normally expect planning authorities to resist changes from established mainstream theatre use to any other use. There may be a tendency to suppose that a change to a seemingly related live entertainment form (for example, cabaret) would not be harmful. In the Trust's view, however, such changes should be regarded with great caution, since they may result in loss of *sui generis* status. This special status is a most important form of protection. Once a theatre moves into another use class, further changes of use can occur without permission and may lead to alterations harmful to future theatre potential. The English Heritage leaflet referred to below enlarges on these pitfalls for officials dealing with planning applications.

Listed Theatres

Reference is made above to the requirements of the GDO regarding planning applications (i.e. applications made for the development of land). What constitutes development in planning law is a complex matter but it does not necessarily include physical change and rarely includes internal alterations to a building. Internal alterations may have drastic and harmful effects on theatre potential - and this is particularly important in those cases where the building is, for the time being in non-theatrical occupation. In the case of a listed building, such works may, however, require an application for listed building consent. Here again, the English Heritage leaflet will be found useful.

The Trust urges planning authorities to refer applications for listed building consent to the Trust for advice. Local authorities may, in fact, find it useful to turn to the Trust on **any** matters concerning the design or care of theatres or theatre-related buildings, including those owned by the authority itself.

Theatre and 'Theatrical' : Some Legal Definitions

1848 2QB 217 per cur., at p.237
As a regular theatre may be a lecture room, dining room, ball room and concert room on successive days, so a room used ordinarily for either of those performances would for the time being be a theatre, if used for the representation of a regular stage play.

Scottish Cinema and Variety Theatres v. Ritchie (1929) SC 350 per the Lord President (Lord Clyde) at p.354
A 'theatre' is properly a place in which spectacles of action - dramas in short - are publicly exhibited; but it cannot be disputed that the word has for long applied to houses used for balls and variety entertainments in which the display is dramatic only in an illegitimate sense...what is more to the point - I think the word 'theatre' has recently begun to be widely applied to places in which films are shown.

PUBLICATIONS

The attention of planning departments and their conservation offices is drawn above to the leaflet *Theatres: A guide to theatre conservation from English Heritage.* This was compiled by English Heritage with the assistance of The Theatres Trust. It gives guidance on the kinds of alterations which may harm the prospects for the effective preservation of theatres for their designed use and is available free from English Heritage.

The Theatres Trust's own Advice Note No.1 *Legal Basis and Planning Functions of the Trust,* and Advice Note No.3, *Theatre Protection - How to Save a Theatre,* are also available free, on request from the Trust.

May 1994
Revised June 1997

The Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0HR

Telephone: (020) 7836 8951 Fax: (020) 7836 3302

E-Mail: info@theatrestrust.org.uk

0118 988 5315

Shinfield
Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs. J Barnes, 36 Ryhill Way, Earley, Reading, Berkshire. RG6 4AZ
Tel/Fax: 0118 9547115

15th July 2000

Mrs A Odell
Case Officer
Wokingham District Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire

Dear Mrs Odell

Application No: 0/2000/1714 – Outline Proposals for Met Office facilities at Shinfield Park.

At the meeting of our Planning and Transportation committee on 5th July, it was resolved to record the comments below in respect of the above outline application in our parish. The proposals contained therein do not appear in the District's Local Plan but will have a major impact on our community and environment, and it is upon these impacts that we have concentrated our comments. However, we deplore the fact that we have been given only days to comment on a four volume submission. We must also record our grave concern that the application went before a Development Control Sub-Committee on 28th June, prior to our comments being called for by 14th July. For that determining committee not to have the local council comments before them, prior to making a decision on such a major development is unacceptable.

1) **Introductory Remarks** – Whilst recognising the applicant as a first class Globally acclaimed organisation that would bring prestige to the area with support from many local residents, we have major concerns about the application as submitted and wish to record a number of challenges as detailed below. Our members were also irritated by the constant reference to the location being in Reading (with even media focus being on the views of Reading MPs when it is outside their area), when in fact it lies entirely in our parish, in the district of Wokingham.

Continued....

2) **Traffic**- The implications of traffic generation by siting 1,400 new jobs in a full employment area which already has a road system operating over-capacity is a prime concern. The entire Transport Assessment whilst impressive in magnitude being an inch thick, is of little value assessing traffic generation and impact as it is essentially based on the 1996 Baseline Model, which is in itself flawed and inappropriate for predicting the future. This fact was established as Part 1 of the recent Public Inquiry into the District Local Plan, where it was used simply as a tool for making comparisons.

The base Model was developed for one purpose only: to assess and compare traffic mitigation measures proposed by the three development consortia competing to build 2,500 houses south of the M4. It was made clear, at the time of its construction that it was not suitable for predicting future traffic conditions, as the database did not reflect actual current Origin and Destination figures. The statistics used had been adjusted downwards to enable the Model to run, as otherwise, modeling a system at capacity with the software available, was not possible. Furthermore, the Baseline Model should not be used for predicting future traffic, as it cannot predict queue lengths, it cannot predict waiting times and it cannot model the peak-hour load spreading.

Therefore, basing conclusions, such as traffic levels and flows at Junction 11, on this Model, is a useless exercise. In addition, it was known that there was significant peak load spreading and latent demand, which could not be assessed correctly. It is noted that in the traffic analysis that peak load spreading has not been taken into account and no consideration of latent demand mentioned. It is clear that considering a single peak hour period in the case is not sufficient. Peak loading exists over a longer period than one hour and the peak hour is certainly not conveniently defined by an hour on the clock. Also, any commuting analysis must take account of travelling time, which this does not.

The analysis provided does not consider both best and worse case traffic scenarios, nor does it look at the necessary 15 years ahead to prudently consider what effects the further growth in this important strategic developments area will have. We consider these are minimal and essential considerations for the community, which has long term aspirations for their living here.

In considering the traffic effects, it has been suggested that the 2,500 houses to be built south of the M4 will be available to the Met Office staff. This is NOT the case. These houses are being built to satisfy the needs of Reading's 20,000 jobs at and around Green Park. There will therefore be long term commuting for at least 750 of the Met Office employees. This is totally out of line with Government guidance on these matters and out of line with the emerging Local Transport Plan.

Continued...

We welcome the commitment to producing a Green Travel Plan which must be part of any Full Application and should include undertakings to support bus services from Winnersh Triangle to Shinfield Park, which would run through our community at Shinfield Rise, to the benefit of our parishioners. Furthermore, whilst endorsing the logic behind restricted parking provision, we are extremely concerned that this could lead to indiscriminate parking on the surrounding unrestricted road system, to the detriment of our residents.

Were the Council mindful to approve the application, major contributions should be sought to local infrastructure improvements including the funding of the proposed Option 2 Link Road Scheme, with a preferred siting alongside the motorway, rather that an proposed through the middle of a valuable wildlife habitat bounded by Whitley Wood Lane and the M4 motorway.

A final point on traffic issues is that in page 17, para 5.02 of the Planning Statement quotes from the Structure Plan, that in the interests of flexibility, new development may be permissible, where they do "not duly add transport problems of pressures for housing development". Our members are of the firm view that this proposal will do both.

3) **Economic and Employment Considerations** – There would appear to be an incomplete consideration of the other planning applications for the area. Noticeably absent are considerations for all other local commercial developments, which could generate additional 2,500 jobs within one kilometer of the Met Office site: these include Foster Wheeler plus the NIRD site, Church Farm and the Advanced Research Centre. In addition a further 25,000 new jobs will be generated within three kilometers of the site at green park, Reading International Business Park, Reading Gate and the Oracle Centre. As there is full employment in Shinfield, all these jobs will have to be filled by commuters. This scenario must be accurately assessed using the correct tools and current data.

Shinfield Parish is already an extremely stressed economic area. There is a total imbalance in housing provision compared to employment provision. House prices are now totally beyond households on below £30,000to £50,000pa. There is totally inadequate affordable housing provision. The communities are rapidly becoming unbalanced with the numbers of teachers, nurses, tradesman, local government workers and other modest income work groups declining. Surveys have indicated that there is less than 1% unemployment in the area. There is therefore no requirement for additional jobs.

The parish population is already forecast by WDC to grow by an unacceptable 70% in the period 1997-2006 and will rapidly create even more imbalance, as there will be few if any additional lower income group families able to migrate to this 'hot spot'. The planned provision of 500 affordable houses will be taken up by local residents already on the house waiting lists made longer by years of neglect in this sector of the housing market whilst planning has been developer led. Adding further to this growth requirement in this period is clearly not acceptable. Indeed it is even possible, given the need to build and sell at rates in excess of 500 houses a year.

Continued...

4) **Ecology** – The site has very considerable biodiversity, with two types of deer seen regularly, a wide ranging bird population in the ancient woodland which contains the rich flora associated with such sites and will be designated a Wildlife heritage Site (WHS). A substantial buffer zone around the WHS will be required and this needs to be reviewed.

Poor if any provision is made for wildlife corridors to and from the WHS. Within close proximity are two other undeveloped sites, Pearmans Corpse and the wildlife area to the south of Foster Wheeler building, between Whitley Wood and the M4 motorway.

The site is on the prominent SW to NE ridge line with its unpredictable hydrogeology. As the applicant's Ecological Appraisal concedes, the site has been neglected over a long period of time and numerous gullies and run-offs on the north west slopes have caused problems over the years and are clearly not understood by the current land occupiers. Despite local representations, the MOD has failed to respond to resident's fears, and flooding and subsidence caused by water run-off from the ridge has been experienced. It would appear that deliberate failure to keep gullies clear for the purpose of their creation and in some cases deliberately blocking them, has been the practice over many years. This problem has not been addressed and with further development of the site will inevitably be worse.

The site is very well wooded and it would be an unacceptable loss to see numerous mature trees unnecessarily sacrificed. We are concerned about the removal of groups of trees as summarised on page 26 without knowledge of the numbers in each group. However, it is recognised that some trees will inevitably have to go. Careful monitoring of this will be needed and permission for named individuals from the parish to have access to the site for this purpose is requested. Access should be provided on request at 24 hours notice. All individuals would observe whatever safety regulations were in force at the time of inspection. We would urge that the perimeter screening, which we are encouraged to see is to be retained, should be improved for the benefit of residents in adjoining properties.

Finally on matters of ecology, we request that in any consideration of approval for this application, consideration should be given to imposing conditions opening up the areas of Ancient woodland for employment by members of the local community and general public.

5) **Building Design** – We trust that the visuals provided, depicting the proposed building perspectives (Typical Section & Elevation Option S4B) are authentic in terms of the portrayed roofline, with only a couple of slender masts. We consider that any further masts or antennae should be strictly controlled.

Continued...

6) **Shinfield Players Theatre** – Whilst passing reference, relating only to its removal, is made to the existence of this very significant local community facility which is established on the development site, scant regard is given in the proposals to its future well-being. Its future welfare is of paramount importance to this council and the assurances given by Mr Peter Ewins, the Chief Executive of the Met Office at a recent site visit to the current Bracknell facility, were well received by the local council members. Whilst we would wish to leave it to the management of the Shinfield Players to negotiate the details of any proposal for their future, we cannot over-emphasise our anxiety for their continuance.

7) **Section 106 Agreement** – In recognition of the major impact that this proposed development would have in the communities that we represent, we would expect that if the District Council is minded to grant permission, a significant 'developer contribution' would be negotiated with the applicant under Section 106 provision of the Act, taking particular regard to the 'Wish list' of benefits appropriate to our parish, submitted by this council.

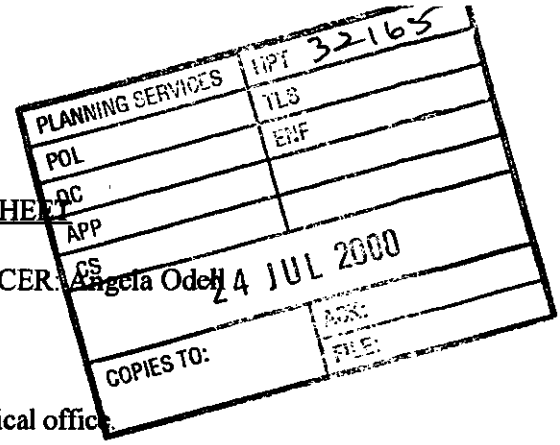
In conclusion, we seek assurances that our comments as detailed above, which have taken considerable time and effort by our members to compile, should be reported in full to members of the Development Control Sub-Committee, before any decision is taken.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Sampson

Mrs Tracy Sampson
Assistant Clerk (0118 9885315)

Copies to:
Mr M Bryant, Mr B Patman, Mr A Pollock – District Councilors
Mr H Hawes of Shinfield Players



TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATION SHEET

APPLICATION NO: F/2000/1714 PLANNING OFFICER: Angela Odell

PARISH: EARLEY (Shinfield Parish Application)

PROPOSAL: Erection of building for use as a meteorological office

ADDRESS: Shinfield Park

APPLICANT: The Met. Office

Thank you for allowing Earley Town Council the opportunity to comment on this application. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is an extremely prestigious proposal, of paramount concern to the Town Council is the amount of additional traffic which will be generated on a road infrastructure which is already extremely overstretched. Whilst the road improvements, which form part of this application are noted, it was felt that these improvements were flawed. Councillors felt that the proposed new roundabouts should be of a larger scale, and that an additional roundabout was required outside the entrance to the Foster Wheeler Building.

The Town Council is currently involved in compiling a Transport Policy for the Town, which is still at a very initial stage. However, one of the major problem areas which has been identified is the amount of through traffic through the Town and also the amount of congestion at the two access points onto the M4, i.e. junction 11 and junction 10 via the A329 and the Loddon Bridge junction. It was the intention of the Town Council that the document would be presented as a whole to the District Council. However, in view of this planning application and the other current application in this area at the former Shire Hall site, Councillors have requested that one of the proposals to be contained in the Transport Policy should now be given serious consideration by the District Council. This is the creation of a junction 10a onto the M4, which could be created at a suitable location off Lower Earley Way. Councillors felt that consideration could be given to making this junction access only, to avoid traffic leaving the motorway at this point and thus increasing the problem of through traffic in the Town. As previously stated, the Town Council's Transport Policy is at a very initial stage, and it is acknowledged that this suggestion requires considerable more research and thought. However, it is felt that the current applications being considered would give the District Council an ideal opportunity to seriously consider Councillors' suggestion of the creation of this additional junction onto the M4.

Of concern also to Councillors when they discussed this application was the increased pressure which would be created on the already over-stretched housing stock. It is acknowledged that some staff may not wish to relocate, although this will, of course, create its own problems in an increase in commuter traffic. However, this area of the District is already under pressure to allow more residential development on the very valuable green gaps on the Shinfield Parish boundary, and this proposal can only serve to increase this pressure.

Finally, Councillors noted with some concern the loss of the Shinfield Players Theatre. It is requested that, should the Development Control Sub-Committee be mindful to approve this application, a condition of the approval is that the Met Office satisfactorily negotiates with the Shinfield Players to ensure that suitable alternative accommodation is found for them. It is also requested that a condition be imposed requiring the running of shuttle buses between the site and the proposed park and ride scheme near to junction 11.

A copy of these observations has been forward to the Head of Engineering Services.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: 20 JUL 2000

CLERK TO EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane, Reading. RG2 9DF
Telephone number 0118 987 3057
Box Office 0118 926 7135

PLANNING SERVICES | HPT
POL | TLS 31454
DC AMO | ENF
APP |
CS |
06 JUL 2000
COPIES TO: | ACK: | FILE:

PATRON ~~ANTON RODGERS

Affiliated to N.O.D.A. *Registered Charity No. 265742*

Tel/No (0118) 941 0305

9 Ashmere Close,
Calcot,
Reading.
RG31 7EN

4TH July 2000

RL

Dear Angela,

With reference to our telephone conversation of today, I am writing to express my concern regarding the relocation of the Meteorological Office at Bracknell to the Shinfield Park site to combine with the European Medium Range Weather Forecasting Centre and the Meteorological College. The management of the Shinfield Players Theatre are currently in dialogue with the Relocation Team for this project and plans for the new site have been examined which reveal that where the Theatre is situated, there is the possibility that this area will be used for the erection of a new Sports and Social Club and Crèche and would require the removal of the Theatre.

This initially caused us great concern, with indications that the Theatre would have to close down permanently with the catastrophic loss of this facility to the community. When one considers that the Theatre boasts a membership of 217, 80 of which are Youth Group members whose ages range from 8 to 18 years, teaching them discipline and confidence, plus the fact that this facility presents a new production every five weeks, bringing live theatre, not only to Shinfield, but the surrounding area as well, would be a tremendous blow.

The Shinfield Theatre members own the actual building itself and lease the small piece of land from the Ministry of Defence on a 5-year, renewable lease. Part of the lease agreement is that the Ministry can give us 6 months notice to quit with minimum compensation and it would be beyond our means to raise sufficient monies to buy a piece of land and erect another Theatre. This prompted the Theatre Management and its members to consider mounting a serious campaign to "Save Shinfield Theatre". Fortunately the Met' Office have not followed this line and as stated are in productive dialogue with us, and recent indications are that they have no intention of closing this facility permanently. I am given to understand that there are possibly three offers on the table: -

1. The possibility that the plans may be adjusted to allow us to stay where we are. A suggestion for an alternative site has been submitted to the Relocation Team by us.

2. That the building be dismantled and re-erected on a new site within the complex. Initial reaction to this is that the building would not stand this type of relocation, also it would mean closing down the Theatre for a period with the subsequent loss of an audience and which is very difficult to recapture.

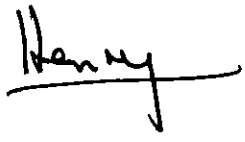
3. That the Meteorological Office would build us a new Theatre with the Shinfield Management and it's members having total autonomy.

As far as the Shinfield Players are concerned this is obviously good news and it is hoped that one of the above suggestions will come to fruition. If this fails then it is the intention of the Theatre management and its members to mount a serious campaign to object most strongly to the closure of this most important facility.

I enclose with this letter a "History of the Shinfield Players and the Shinfield Theatre" which was produced to celebrate the new millennium and hope that you find it of interest. It relates the founding of the Shinfield Players and what has been achieved to the present date.

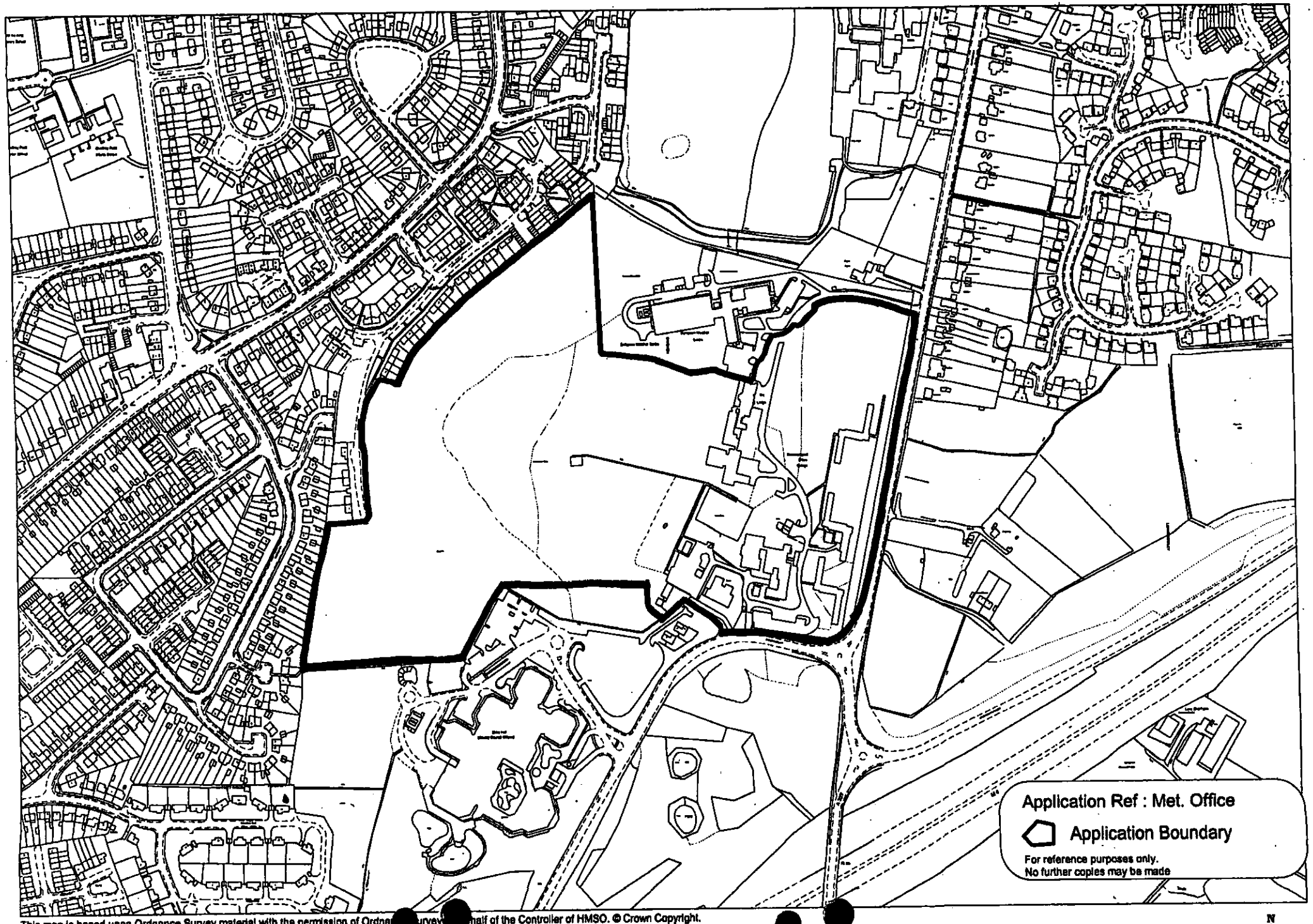
Finally, since the purchase of this building and its erection on its current site in 1970, members, both past and present have raised enormous amounts of money to ensure that the building was of a good standard, safe and comfortable for its audiences and, since its opening, it is estimated that a figure approaching £250,000 has been spent on this project. Over the last two years alone a total of £42,000 has been spent on rewiring the Theatre completely bringing it up to the latest E.C. Standards. A new roof covering has been put in place ensuring the building remains watertight and the Car Park has been resurfaced for the comfort and safety of our patrons. This Theatre is a true Community Theatre and all persons of whatever race or creed are welcome to use this facility. It would be a complete tragedy if this Theatre were forced to close down.

Yours sincerely



Henry Hawes – Chairman Shinfield Players Theatre.

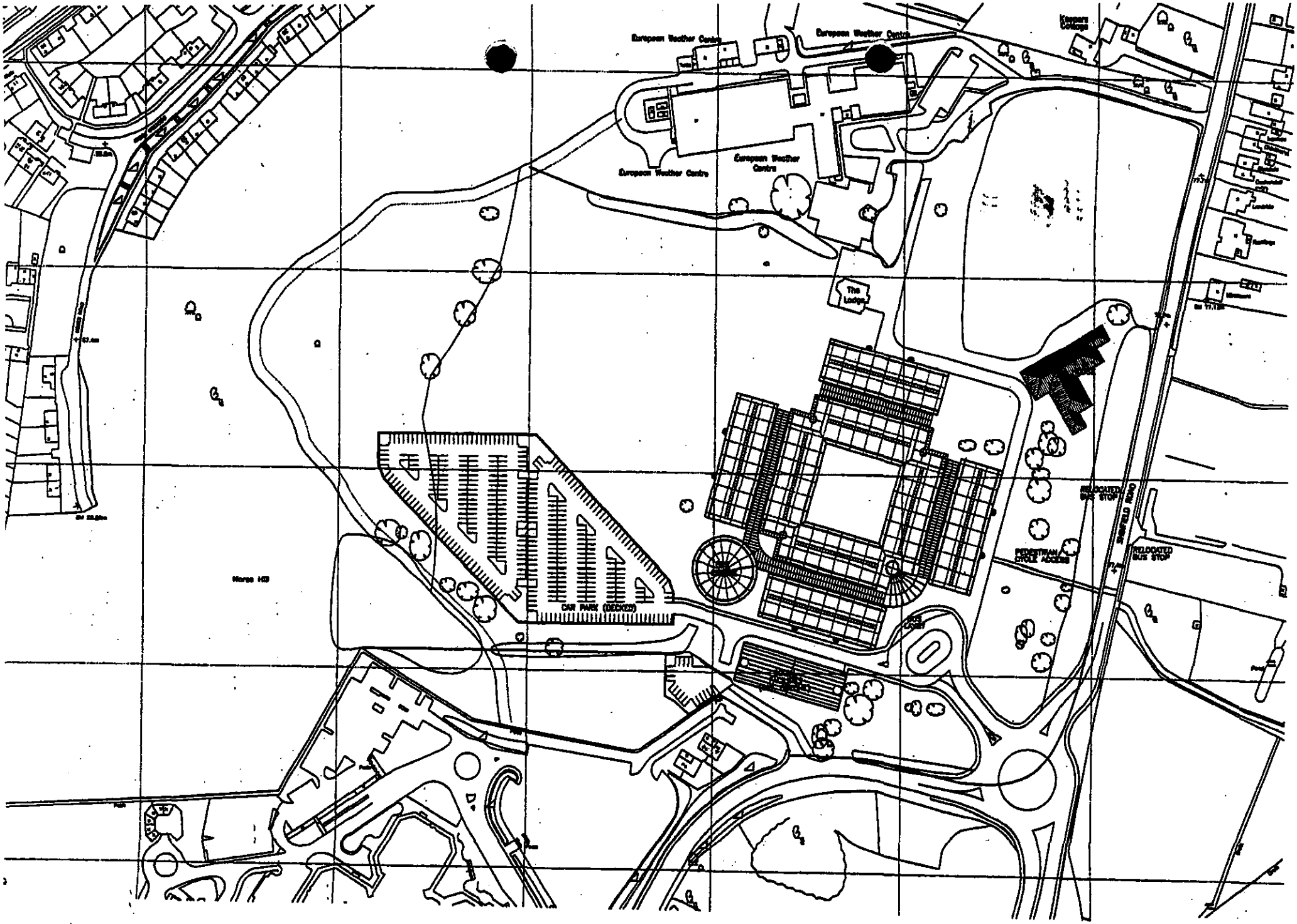
Angela Odell,
Environmental Services Department,
Planning Services,
P.O.Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berks.
RG40 1WR



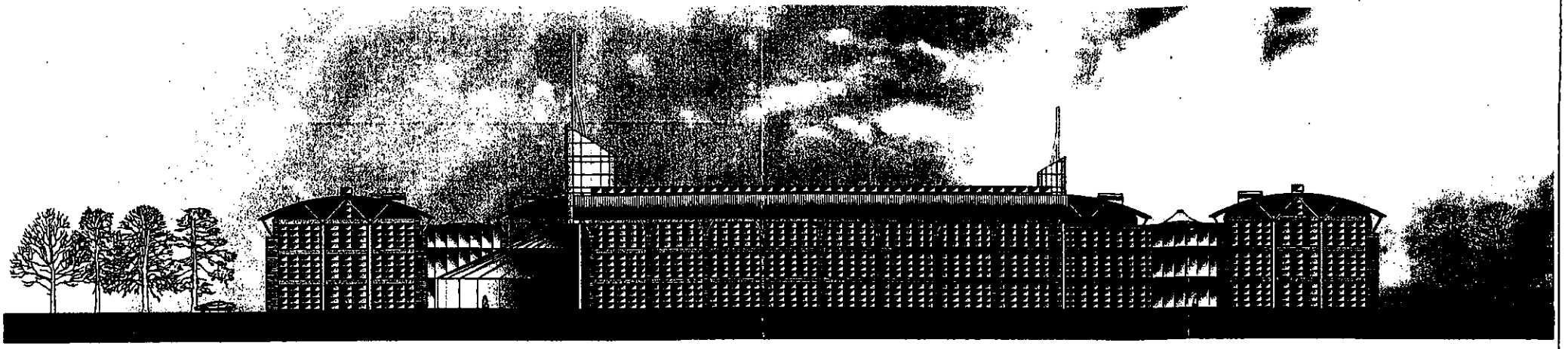
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA088134

Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

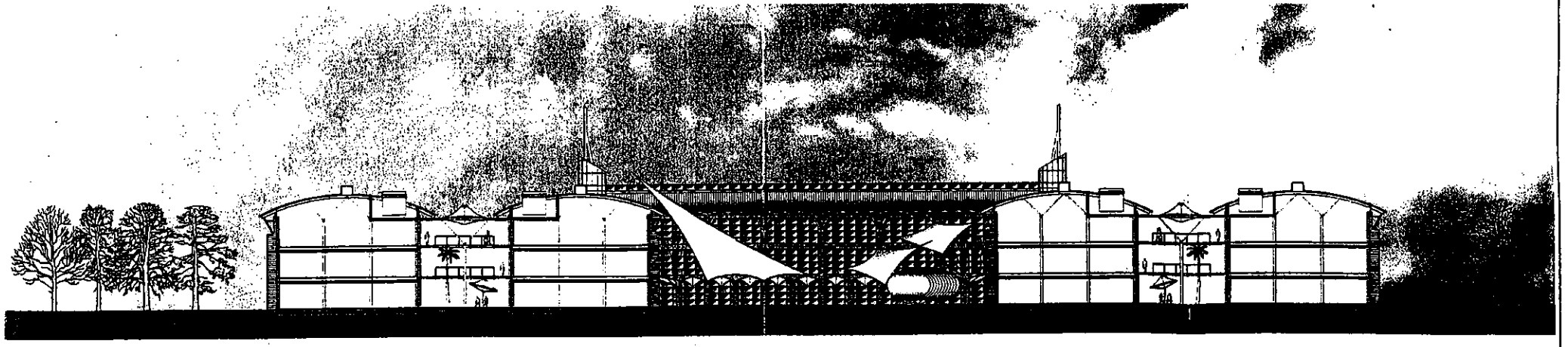
N
W E



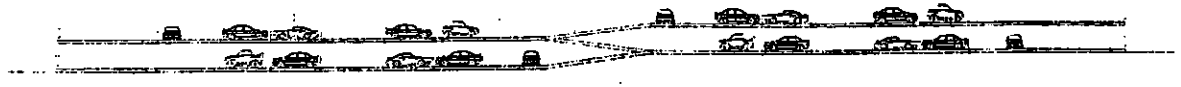
Indicative Plan



Typical elevation main building (east)



Typical section main building (west - east)



Typical section car park (west - east)

Project
Met. Office relocation
Shinfield Park, Reading

Drawing Title
Typical Section & Elevation
Option S4B

Date	Scale	Drawn by
08-05-00	1:250 (A1) 1:500 (A3)	NPB
Project No	Drawing No	Revision
9906	SK008	-

Barton Willmore
Architecture

Architects Master Planners Town Planners
Environmental Consultants Project Services

The Barton Willmore Partnership Regent Limited
Beansheaf Farm House, Bourne Close
Tel: 0118 943 0000 Fax: 0118 943 0001
email: enquiries@bartonwillmore.co.uk

Angela Odell

From: Andy Glencross
Sent: 21 July 2000 14:24
To: Angela Odell
Subject: Met office planning application O/2000/1714

Hi Angela

I recieved a copy of Shinfield Parish Council's views on the above. I have the following comments on their ecological views ; -

* There is already a substantive buffer zone for the woodland proposed in the ecological appraisal. The built development proposed is some distance from the woods.

* It would be difficult to form a corridor to Pearman's Copse as it involves crossing two roads.

* *The woods are effectively linked to the foster wheeler woods already. I am currently trying to* secure appropriate management of both sites to maximise their wildlife value.

* On my site visit I saw no sign of any "gullies" designed or otherwise. The site lies on a clay ridge from which water will inevitably run off. The problem would be better dealt with by some form of collection ditch at the base of the slope and off the site.

* I agree with SPC comments and repeat that the ecological appraisal must supersede the arboricultural survey.

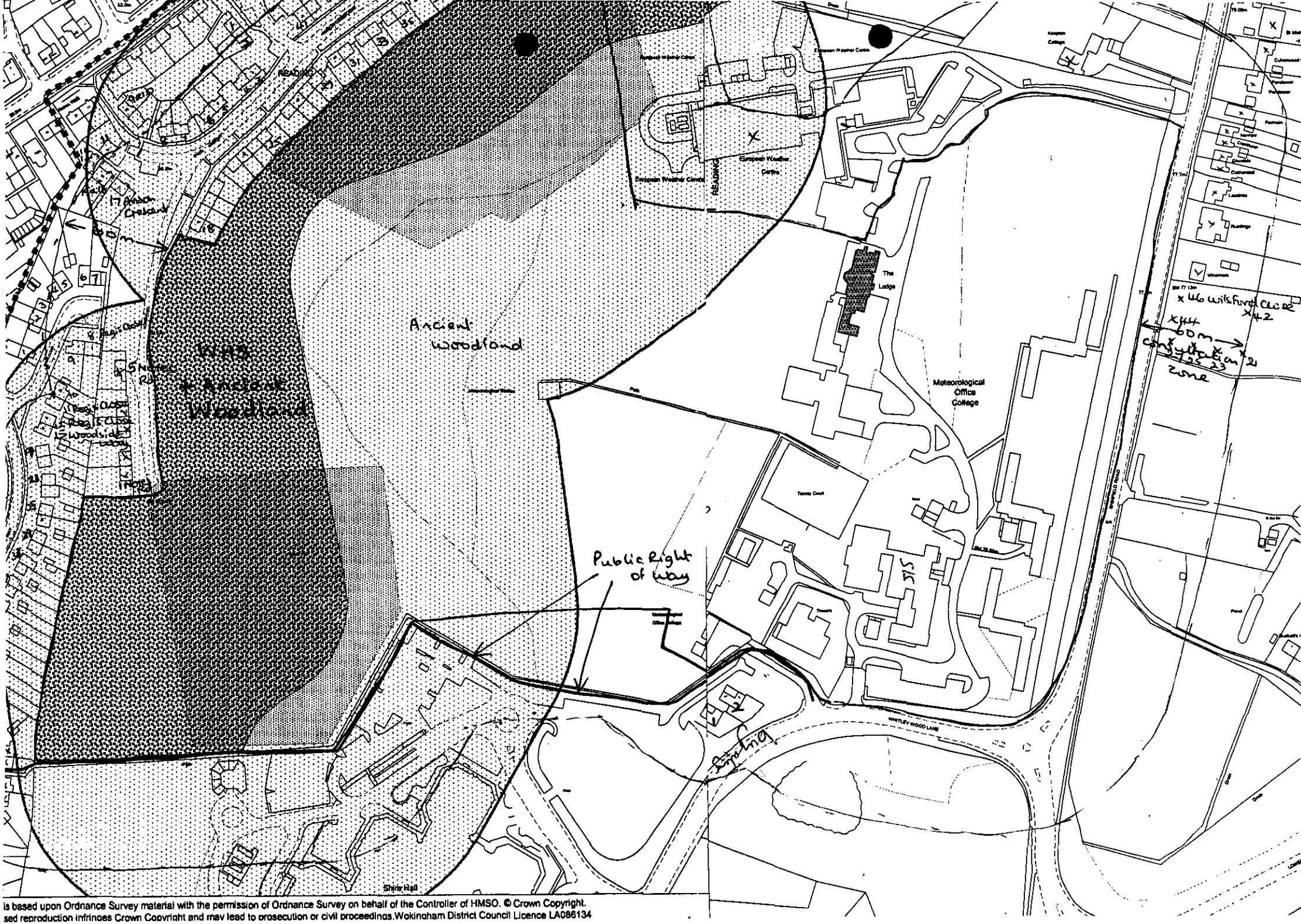
* I do not think the ecology of the wood would benefit from open public access, Parish Council should be aware of current problems along the boundary with Whitley Wood. There maybe some scope to allow for its use by local schools.

Finally if anyone at the Parish Council wishes to know more details of this site then please put them on to me.

I hope this is of help to you.

Cheers

Andy



is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
sed reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

S. Wi Players

6 months loan

It disposed & would go

If stopped for Splyn Tyler

Playground wants to go anyway

but not under

Like 15 Feb if poss

Enquire. - Importance of Phone & Cards-see

Coach paid early Sept

Written to negotiate prospective buddies

P

Bill Dennis to explain

3 MP Obliging chap.

Mike - Minister

Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL

0/2000/1714

31650

Wokingham District Council
P.O. Box 155
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1WW

COPIES TO: | FILE:

Tony Lear
Director of Environment

Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 7TD
☎ 0118 939 0900
DX 40124 Reading (Castle Street)
Fax: 0118 958 9770
Minicom 0118 939 0700

Our Ref: 00/00738/WOKADJ/AD
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎ 0118 939 0023

7th July 2000

Your contact is: Andrew Dawe, Planning

Dear Sir/Madam;

Planning Application Number : 00/00738/WOKADJ/AD

Re: Outline application to erect a building for use as a meteorological office.

At: Training College Meteorological Office Shinfield Road Out Of Reading Borough

Applicant: Meteorological Office

Thank you for your application for **Wokingham District Council Consultation** received on 27th June 2000. The application has been registered and the application number is **00/00738/WOKADJ/AD.**

Please display the enclosed site notice(s) in a prominent position in accordance with the attached instructions as soon as possible.

Central Government sets an eight week target for deciding the majority of planning applications. In Reading, there is a three week neighbour consultation period and larger applications are reported to Committee, normally held every 4 weeks. Where feasible, the Council is committed to seeking amendments to schemes in order to make them acceptable. If you have not had a decision by 22nd August 2000 then please contact me to check on progress.

Please note that under the Access to Information Act all information on the application file, including details about on-going negotiations, is open to public inspection.

If, by 22nd August 2000

- you have not been told that your application is invalid; or
- you have not been told that your fee cheque has been dishonoured; or
- you have not been given a decision in writing; or
- you have not agreed in writing to extend the period in which the decision may be given,

then you can appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment under section 78/section 195 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. You should appeal within six months and you must use a form which you

can get from the Planning Inspectorate at Tollgate House, Houlton Street, Bristol BS2 9DJ. This does not apply if your application has already been referred to the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Please contact me if you require any further assistance.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Dawe

for Planning Manager

Jane Griffiths MP - Labour Reading East

Reading Office:
10 Church Street,
Reading, RG1 2SD

Tel: 0118 957 3756
Fax: 0118 958 0949

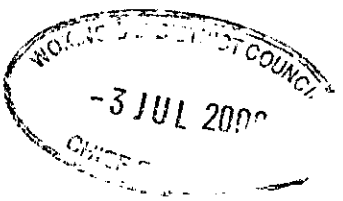
HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA
e-mail: griffithsj@parliament.uk

Westminster Office
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

Tel: 020 7219 4122
Fax: 020 7219 0719

Ref: JPG/EP 001392

30 June 2000



Dear Jane

I am writing further to your letter regarding the possible relocation of the Met Office.

I am aware of the situation and asked questions about the economic effect in the House of Commons, as you will see from the enclosed document.

If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Jane

Karen Sutherland fr c/o.

Jane Griffiths MP
Labour Reading East

Ang. Odell

Jane Earl
Chief Executive
Wokingham District Council
PO Box 150
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1WQ

House of Commons

Monday 17 April 2000

Oral Answers to Questions

DEFENCE

The Secretary of State was asked–

Meteorological Office

1. Jane Griffiths (Reading, East): If he will make a statement on the future of the Meteorological Office. [117879]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Dr. Lewis Moonie): As a trading fund combining the best of the public and private sectors, the Meteorological Office will continue to build on its success as a world-leading meteorological service. Its aim is to enable individuals, society and enterprises everywhere to make the most of the weather and the natural environment.

Jane Griffiths: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. When Ministers consider the future location of the Met Office, which I understand will have to relocate from its current site, could they consider the economy of the entire country and the fact that the south-east is immensely congested? That makes it difficult to locate such an office in the Reading area as has been suggested.

Dr. Moonie: To move forward successfully, the Met Office must harness the benefits that go with a modern building and its associated infrastructure. Redevelopment or refurbishment of the main Bracknell site would not be cost-effective. No decisions on the final location have yet been taken, but a move to Shinfield park, near Reading, would have attractions in developing the Met Office's long-standing relations with the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts. Other locations that meet the Met Office's future strategic and business needs will be considered. An application for outline planning approval for Shinfield park will be submitted to the local planning authority at the end of May 2000, and that will address a range of environmental issues, including traffic management.

Mr. Andrew MacKay (Bracknell): The Minister will be aware that the Met Office is based in my constituency, not in Reading, East. Does he accept that the people of Bracknell greatly appreciate having the Met Office in Bracknell, and that the town has had a long association

with it? The people of Bracknell are appalled to learn from the hon. Member for Reading, East (Jane Griffiths)–this morning, on local radio and now in the House–that they should all lose their jobs and that the office should relocate to Liverpool. Is that official Labour party policy?

Dr. Moonie: As I said in my initial answer, our current intention is to consider the Shinfield park site as the office's preferred option. Eighty per cent. of the Met Office's staff are mobile grades. Although most of them would be expected to relocate to the new site, it is likely that, if it were at Shinfield park, most would commute.

SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane, Reading. RG2 9DF
Telephone number 0118 987 3057
Box Office 0118 926 7135

PATRON - ANTON RODGERS

Affiliated to N.O.D.A. *Registered Charity No. 265742*

Tel/No (0118) 941 0305

9,Ashmere Close,
Calcot,
Reading,
Berks.
RG31 7EN

6th July 2000

LIBRARY 31520
AMO
COPIES TO: ACK: FILE:
RL

Dear Angela,

Subject – SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

With reference to my recent correspondence to you dated 4th July, concerning the above establishment and the proposed move by the Meteorological Office at Bracknell to the Shinfield Park site, and my concern expressed over the future of the Theatre and the potential loss of this important asset to the Community. I would like to extend an invitation to you and your members to visit the Shinfield Players Theatre for either a guided tour of the establishment, or as our guests at a forthcoming production.

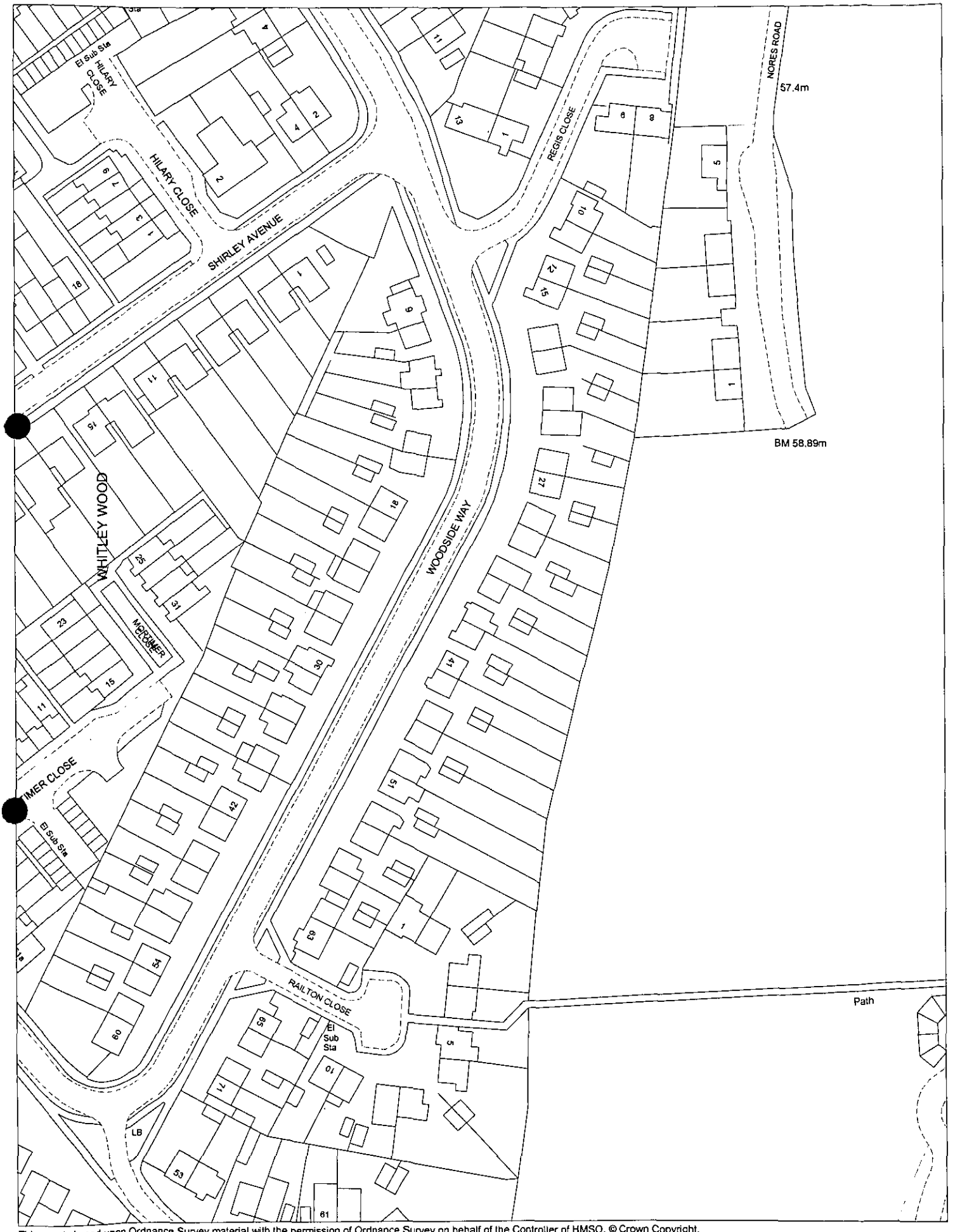
I feel that this would be beneficial to both parties as you could see at first hand the valuable work that the Theatre does both for the adult members, the youth of the area, and the inhabitants of both Berkshire and Hampshire.

It would be appreciated if you could take up this invitation and I look forward to hearing from you so that an appropriate date can be arranged to suit both parties.

Yours sincerely

Henry Hawes – Chairman, Shinfield Players Theatre

Angela Odell,
Environmental Services Department,
Planning Services,
P.O.Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berkshire.
RG40 1WR



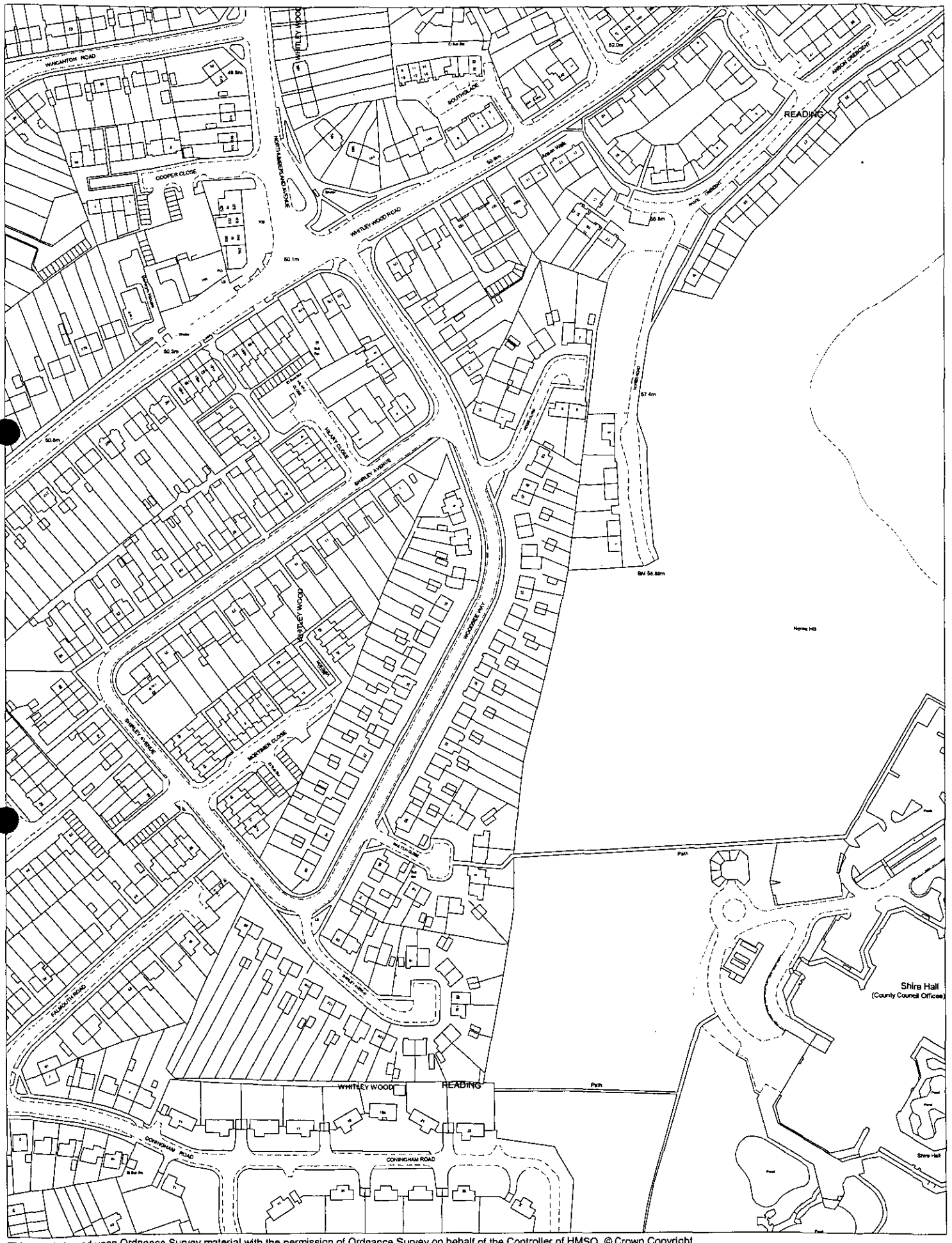
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

30 June 2000

Scale: 1 : 1250

N
W E
S



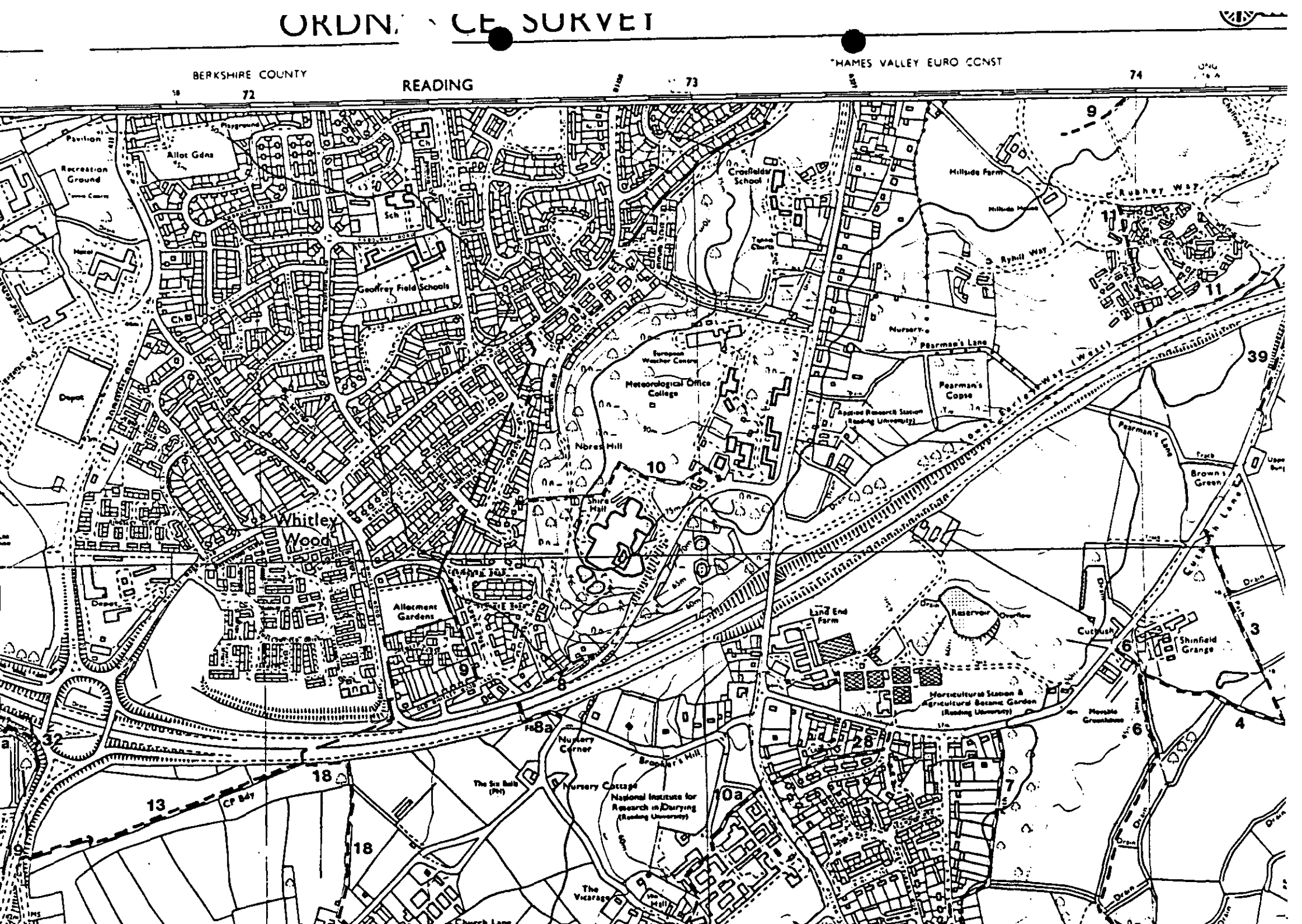
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

30 June 2000

Scale: 1 : 2500

N
W E
S


ORDN CE SURVEY
BERKSHIRE COUNTY
READING
THAMES VALLEY EURO CONST
72
73
74
Pavilion
Recreation Ground
Allot Gdns
Playground
Sch
Geoffrey Field Schools
Depot
Crossfields School
Tennis Courts
Hillside Farm
Hillside House
Rubbey Way
Ryhill Way
Nursery
Pearman's Lane
Pearman's Copse
European Weather Centre
Meteorological Office College
Applied Research Station (Reading University)
Nbres Hill
Shire Hall
Whitley Wood
Allotment Gardens
Brown's Green
Land End Farm
Reservoir
Overflow
Cutbush
Shinfield Grange
Horticultural Station & Agricultural Botanic Garden (Reading University)
Nursery Corner
Broadlay's Hill
The Six Bells (PH)
Nursery Cottage
National Institute for Research in Dairying (Reading University)
The Vicarage
Church Lane
CP Bdy
Drain
9
10
11
39
28
18
13
32
8a
10a
7
6
4
3

WORK SHEET FOR : Angela Odell

Application Number : O/2000/1714

Applicant : Ministry Of Defence C/O Barton Wilmore Planning.

Location : Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Proposal : Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

Site Notice Displayed ? :	YES	NO	DATE
	✓		28.6.00

Date of Neighbour Notifications : .....

Date of Site Visit : 28.6.00

Date Registered : 09/06/2000

Earliest Date for Decision : 14/07/2000

Latest Consultation Date/Site Notice Expiry Date : 14/07/2000

This application will have expired on: 04/08/2000. You need to make a decision 1 day prior to this date for this application to count as determined in less than 8 weeks.

Consultation Responses :

Planning Issues :

Application Number: O/2000/1714

Appraisal :

Recomendation : Approval: ☐ **Refusal:** ☐
(tick appropriate box)

Application Number O/2000/1714
Conditions/Reasons for Refusal

No	Std Con	Std Reas	Non Std Conditions / Reasons for Refusal

RECORD OF SITE VISIT

SITE ADDRESS: Training College Meteorological Office Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road Shinfield Reading.

APPLICATION NUMBER: O/2000/1714

OFFICER: Angela Odell

DATE OF SITE VISIT: 28.6.00

1 SITE/STATUTORY NOTICE DISPLAYED ? Yes 28.6.00.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SURROUNDINGS Low density dept. on hilltop.

3. DESCRIPTION OF SITE/BUILDING Existing met office college bldg — see survey drawings + photos. Set in parkland

4. RELATIONSHIP TO ADJOINING PROPERTIES 2 bungalows at N. end of Foster Wheeler. No other res. directly affected.

5. SITE CONSTRAINTS

TREES See survey submitted

ACCESS/PARKING from Shinfield Road

LEVELS Flat on top. Slopes down to W. where woodland

BOUNDARY TREATMENT

OTHERS

Tel: (0118) 974 6445

Date:

My ref: O/2000/1714

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

CONFIDENTIAL

Councillor Spratling
18 Moor Copse Close
Earley
RG6 7NA

Dear Councillor

Application Number: O/2000/1714
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

I write to let you know that the above mentioned application has been recommended for APPROVAL: ☐ REFUSAL: ☐ under delegated powers.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact **Angela Odell** on **(0118) 974 6445**. If you then feel the application needs to be transferred to the next available Development Control Sub-Committee for decision please fill in the form below.
This form must be received no later than _____

Yours faithfully

John Mitchell
Development Control Manager

LISTING FORM
Case officer: **Angela Odell** Application Number: **O/2000/1714**
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

Transfer: Yes ☐ No ☐
Reason for Transfer:
_____
_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Councillor Spratling

NB. It would be helpful for speedy decision making if you could respond, even if you do not wish this application to be transferred.

MET.OFFICE – NOTES ON PRESENTATION MEETING GIVEN BY THE MET.OFFICE ON 26.6.00 AT BRACKNELL

Attended by:
District Councillors: Bryant, Dredge, Mrs Robertson, Mrs Long.
Parish Councillors: Heggerman, Mrs Barnes, ?
WDC Offficers: Jane Earl, Karen Satterford, John Mitchell, Angela Odell.
Met. Office staff including their chief exec. and Graham Cooper.
Ian Tant of Barton Willmore.

Met. Office explained why they needed to move (consolidate to one site, offices in need of extensive works and not worth it, site too cramped, etc.) Their timescale is to fit in with arrival of new supercomputer (this happens every 3-4 years) and the next 'window' would be in 2006/7 which would be too late in terms of the state of the existing building, etc. Therefore want to do it now.

Main issues raised by Cllr Bryant were traffic and what would happen to the Shinfield Players.

Met. Office/Ian explained the traffic/GTP proposals (These are in the traffic statement by WSP).
Re. Shinfield Players, Graham explained that they had been consulted about 2 months ago and the Met. Office had offered them space in the proposed social building. However, they had said that they wanted their own building so that they could put on performances every night in a run and have time in the day to set out the stage. He explained that the Players were now reconsidering and he was waiting to hear what they wanted to do.
Ian explained that the existing Players' building was in the way as it was the best site for the social building (so that it could be accessed easily by the public and out of the secure area) but that the building was a terrapin and could be moved.

Mrs Barnes asked what would happen to the Shinfield Park site if the new headquarters is not located there. Met. Office explained that the training would be moved off the site and that the site would probably be disposed of.

AO
27.6.00

The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership - Reading
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot,
Reading, RG31 7BW.
Tel 0118 943 0000 Fax 0118 943 0002
e-mail: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

09 JUN 2000* 1714

Barton Willmore
Planning

Director of Environmental Services,
Wokingham District Council,
PO Box 157,
Council Offices,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berks. RG40 1WR

9906/A3/WD/SLH

8th June 2000

Dear Madam,

PROPOSED MET OFFICE RELOCATION TO SHINFIELD PARK, READING
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1984
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT CIRCULAR 18/84
NOTICE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BY THE MET OFFICE

On behalf of The Met. Office we herewith enclose a consultation under the above Circular relating to the proposed relocation of their headquarters building from Bracknell to Shinfield Park, Reading.

Part IV of the above Act sets out the arrangements by which Government Departments will consult with Local Planning Authorities concerning their proposals for development before proceeding with development which would otherwise require planning permission.

We attach a letter of authority from the Defence Estates dated 26th May 2000 that we may submit such a Notice of Proposed Development on behalf of The Met Office. Under this procedure we seek clearance for the development and not planning permission. At this stage the proposals are in "outline" rather than in "detail", and we seek the Council's views as to the *principle of such a development on this site in terms of the quantum of floorspace proposed.* Detailed plans have not been prepared, although indicative plans, elevations and cross sections of the building illustrate how such a development might appear on the site.

In support of this consultation we enclose six copies of:

1. A planning statement which includes a design statement;

2. A Landscape Appraisal and Assessment;

3. A Transport Report incorporating procedures for a "Green Transport/Travel Plan".

We would also advise you that the Met. Office are undertaking a similar consultation with Bracknell Forest Borough Council relating to a proposed relocation to Beaufort Park, Bracknell, presently the site of the technical development and instruments division of the Met. Office.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of the proposal in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact either Ian Tant (Planning Partner) or the writer in the first instance.

Yours faithfully,

W.R. Dawes

W.R. DAWES
Senior Planner

DE
DEFENCE ESTATES
Delivering Estate Solutions to Defence Needs

South East & Germany
Blandford House, Farnborough Road
Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2HA
Telephone: Direct dial: 01252 348907
DFTS: (9)4217 3907
Facsimile: 01252 348932
Mil Fax: (9)4217 3932
Stephen Rice BSc FRICS
Manager South East & Germany

code

Mr B Dawes
The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership
Beansheaf Farmhouse
Bourne Close
Calcot
Reading RG31 7BW

Your reference

Our reference 09 JUN 2000 * 1714
DE SE/BRLM/284

Date
26 May 2000

Dear Mr Dawes

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1984 -DOE CIRCULAR 18/84 – NOTICE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ON BEHALF OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

Part IV of the above Act sets out the arrangements by which Government Departments will consult Local Planning Authorities about their proposals for development before proceeding with development, which would otherwise require planning permission.

It has been confirmed by the Meteorological Office, who are part of the Ministry of Defence that you have been instructed to issue a Notice of Proposed Development for the construction of a new headquarters office building, student accommodation block, Social facilities building, and associated car parking provision at the Met office site known as Shinfield Park Reading Berkshire. You are hereby authorised to submit the Notice of proposed Development, a copy of which must be sent to this office.

The enclosed copy of this letter must accompany your submission to confirm that you have been authorised to do so by the Ministry of Defence.

Would you please provide me have a copy of the Local Planning Authority's decision in due course, or return this letter of authorisation with an accompanying letter if it is decided not to proceed with the consultation.

Yours sincerely

K M HOWLETT BSc (Hons)
Senior Estate Surveyor (RAF & Met Office Built Estate)
DE (SE&G)

CC: Mr G. Cooper Met Office Relocation Team PD House – Bracknell
CC: Mr K. Scott – (Head of Property & Office Services) Met Office PD House Bracknell

Tel: (0118) 974 6445

Date:

My ref: O/2000/1714

CONFIDENTIAL

Councillor Siggery
Willow
375 Reading Road
Winnersh
RG41 5LT

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Councillor

Application Number: O/2000/1714
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

I write to let you know that the above mentioned application has been recommended for APPROVAL: ☐ REFUSAL: ☐ under delegated powers.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact **Angela Odell** on **(0118) 974 6445**. If you then feel the application needs to be transferred to the next available Development Control Sub-Committee for decision please fill in the form below.
This form must be received no later than _____

Yours faithfully

John Mitchell
Development Control Manager

LISTING FORM
Case officer: **Angela Odell** Application Number: **O/2000/1714**
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

Transfer: Yes ☐ No ☐
Reason for Transfer:
_____
_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Councillor Siggery

NB. It would be helpful for speedy decision making if you could respond, even if you do not wish this application to be transferred.

Tel: (0118) 974 6445

Date:

My ref: O/2000/1714

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

CONFIDENTIAL

Councillor Rolls
14 Tiptree Close
Earley
RG6 4HS

Dear Councillor

Application Number: O/2000/1714
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

I write to let you know that the above mentioned application has been recommended for APPROVAL: ☐ REFUSAL: ☐ under delegated powers.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact **Angela Odell** on **(0118) 974 6445**. If you then feel the application needs to be transferred to the next available Development Control Sub-Committee for decision please fill in the form below.
This form must be received no later than _____

Yours faithfully

John Mitchell
Development Control Manager

LISTING FORM
Case officer: **Angela Odell** Application Number: **O/2000/1714**
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

Transfer: Yes ☐ No ☐
Reason for Transfer:
_____
_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Councillor Rolls

NB. It would be helpful for speedy decision making if you could respond, even if you do not wish this application to be transferred.

Tel: (0118) 974 6445

Date:

My ref: O/2000/1714

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

CONFIDENTIAL

Councillor Green
102 Arnett Avenue
Finchampstead
RG40 4EE

Dear Councillor

Application Number: O/2000/1714
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

I write to let you know that the above mentioned application has been recommended for APPROVAL: ☐ REFUSAL: ☐ under delegated powers.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact **Angela Odell** on **(0118) 974 6445**. If you then feel the application needs to be transferred to the next available Development Control Sub-Committee for decision please fill in the form below.
This form must be received no later than _____

Yours faithfully

John Mitchell
Development Control Manager

LISTING FORM
Case officer: **Angela Odell** Application Number: **O/2000/1714**
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

Transfer: Yes ☐ No ☐
Reason for Transfer:
_____
_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Councillor Green

NB. It would be helpful for speedy decision making if you could respond, even if you do not wish this application to be transferred.

Tel: (0118) 974 6445

Date:

My ref: O/2000/1714

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

CONFIDENTIAL

Councillor A Pollock
8 Halfacre Close
Spencers Wood
Reading
RG7 1DZ

Dear Councillor

Application Number: O/2000/1714
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

I write to let you know that the above mentioned application has been recommended for APPROVAL: ☐ REFUSAL: ☐ under delegated powers.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact **Angela Odell** on **(0118) 974 6445**. If you then feel the application needs to be transferred to the next available Development Control Sub-Committee for decision please fill in the form below.
This form must be received no later than _____

Yours faithfully

John Mitchell
Development Control Manager

LISTING FORM
Case officer: **Angela Odell** Application Number: **O/2000/1714**
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

Transfer: Yes ☐ No ☐
Reason for Transfer:
_____
_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Councillor A Pollock

NB. It would be helpful for speedy decision making if you could respond, even if you do not wish this application to be transferred.

Tel: (0118) 974 6445

Date:

My ref: O/2000/1714

CONFIDENTIAL

Councillor B Patman
Meadow View
Basingstoke Road
Spencers Wood
Reading
RG7 1AL

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Councillor

Application Number: O/2000/1714
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

I write to let you know that the above mentioned application has been recommended for APPROVAL: ☐ REFUSAL: ☐ under delegated powers.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact **Angela Odell** on **(0118) 974 6445**. If you then feel the application needs to be transferred to the next available Development Control Sub-Committee for decision please fill in the form below.
This form must be received no later than _____

Yours faithfully

John Mitchell
Development Control Manager

LISTING FORM
Case officer: **Angela Odell** Application Number: **O/2000/1714**
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

Transfer: Yes ☐ No ☐
Reason for Transfer:

_____

_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Councillor B Patman

NB. It would be helpful for speedy decision making if you could respond, even if you do not wish this application to be transferred.

Tel: (0118) 974 6445

Date:

My ref: O/2000/1714

CONFIDENTIAL

Councillor M Bryant
Rosebry
19 Salmond Road
Shinfield
RG2 8QN

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Councillor

Application Number: O/2000/1714
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

I write to let you know that the above mentioned application has been recommended for APPROVAL: ☐ REFUSAL: ☐ under delegated powers.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact **Angela Odell** on **(0118) 974 6445**. If you then feel the application needs to be transferred to the next available Development Control Sub-Committee for decision please fill in the form below.
This form must be received no later than _____

Yours faithfully

John Mitchell
Development Control Manager

LISTING FORM
Case officer: **Angela Odell** Application Number: **O/2000/1714**
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

Transfer: Yes ☐ No ☐
Reason for Transfer:

_____

_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Councillor M Bryant

NB. It would be helpful for speedy decision making if you could respond, even if you do not wish this application to be transferred.

From John.

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

From: Tom Callaghan, Highways — My Ref: O/2000/1714

To: John Mitchell, Development Control Manager — Your Ref: O/2000/1714

Date: 17th August 2000

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION O/2000/1714 FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF HEADQUARTERS AND ANCILLARY BUILDINGS FOR USE BY METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE AT SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD.
APPLICATION BY MOD UNDER CIRCULAR 18/84

I am aware of the Authorities general support of the Met. Offices' proposals to relocate at Shinfield Park, however as you know there is already great concern from interested parties/groups as the likely implications that the proposals may have on transport, particularly as the highway network in the vicinity of the site is severely congested during peak periods. I can confirm that Highway Authority shares the majority of these views, although mindful of the fact that many issues could be resolved through the provision of an adequate GTP and financial contributions/infrastructure improvements.

EXISTING SITUATION

The A327 forms part of the Primary Distributor Road network and is defined as a 'road of more than local importance' within the Berkshire Structure Plan. It provides links between the M3 and the Blackwater Towns to the South, with Reading and the M4 to the north. It has been acknowledged for some time that the A327 south of the application site suffers from extreme congestion particularly during the morning peak period, with traffic queuing consistently back from the B3270 Lower Earley Way junction extending to the roundabout junction with Hyde End Road to the south and beyond.

Traffic data from a Permanent ATC site on the A327 been obtained by the applicants agent WSP and confirms that during the peak periods the A327 carries approx. 1645 and 1482 two way vehicles during the am and pm peaks respectively. However, these are averaged figures during February 2000 and are therefore exceeded 50% of the time. Other recent survey data obtained when considering other development proposals along the A327 corridor identified flows of 2533 two way during the peak periods which is in excess of the theoretical link flow capacity of the A327, that is to say that the A327 at certain times, cannot physically accommodate any more traffic. Although this is considered to contribute to the queuing northbound along the A327, it is more often associated with the insufficient capacity of the double mini roundabout junction with the B3270.

The Council's Local Transport Plan 2001-2006 identifies the A327 as a strategic corridor and sets out proposals to include it within a multi modal corridor study exploring the potential for road space re-allocation to provide more sustainable modes of travel, including bus priority measures.

PROPOSALS

The size and scale of the development is covered in detail within the Planning Officers report, however there are significant changes proposed to the existing mini roundabout A327/Whitley Wood Lane to facilitate access to the development. This is in principle acceptable to the Highway Authority although there will need to be further detailed design and modelling work to be carried out. It has also been indicated by the applicant to carry out the access works in conjunction with the improvements planned to the roundabout black boy roundabout to the immediate south, which would minimise the disruption to a single period. Contributions have already been secured from other developments in the locality, although the shortfall required to bring the scheme to fruition will need to be met by the Met Office.

The internal arrangement of the site is not an issue at this stage as I understand the detailed scheme may alter significantly to that shown on the drawings. In any event, there is sufficient land within the site to ensure adequate access roads/turning facilities for all vehicles including and public transport/delivery/service vehicles.

Pedestrian/cycleway access is to form an integral part of this development. Although the applicant proposes a Toucan crossing on the A327 to the west of the site, there are still a number of outstanding issues relating to improving pedestrian/cycle access, in particular, the Highway Authority is exploring with the applicants the possibility of upgrading the existing footpaths links running through the site for shared use for cycleways. This would provide good links to the residential areas to the north west of the site. These discussions are still in the early stages, however the good accessibility by foot and bike are considered to be a fundamental part of this proposal.

Improved public transport in the form of a shuttle bus linking the site to the local stations is also proposed. Whilst this is welcomed, there is concern as to whether the anticipated modal shift/patronage is realistic. There is also a concern that improvements to public transport should not be exclusively for Met Office employees and that improved public transport facilities should be integrated within the existing services that are available. Discussions are still continuing with WSP on these issues.

The GTP proposed by the Met Office is also welcomed although targets and more measures of restraint, including possible staged reduction in car parking as the GTP develops should be included. These issues are easily resolvable.

INITIAL CONCLUSIONS

Whilst there are a number of outstanding issues (to be specified later) it is likely the Highway Authority will not be raising any objection in principle to the proposed development. However, discussions are continuing and it is anticipated that the majority of these issues will be addressed in time for the Committee report.

I hope this is helpful, however please call me if you

Many thanks

Tom Callaghan

5.00 OUTLINE APPLICATION NO. O/2000/1714 FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF HEADQUARTERS AND ANCILLARY BUILDINGS (TOTAL FLOORSPACE 37,160 SQ M APPROX.) WITH ASSOCIATED DECKED CAR PARKING FOR USE BY METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE AT SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD APPLICATION BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE UNDER CIRCULAR 18/84

Purpose of the Report

5.01 In the interests of clarity Members are advised that the Council is **not** the determining Authority in this case. The application is made by the Crown, and development by the Crown does not require planning permission. Government policy, expressed in Circular 18/84, is that the Council should handle the proposal as though it were a planning application in terms of publicity etc, and should forward its views, and those of consultees and respondents, to the developing Department, in this case the Meteorological Office, which is part of the Ministry of Defence.

5.02 The purpose of the report is to consider the above application and resolve the observations to be forwarded to the Meteorological Office.

Suggested Action

5.03 The Committee is advised to endorse the recommendation set out below:

To advise the Meteorological Office that Wokingham District Council expresses its support and raises no objection in principle to Application O/2000/1714 for the proposed erection of headquarters and ancillary buildings subject to entering into a legal agreement under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1992 and any other relevant statutory provision, comprising the following:

(i) An appropriate package of measures to mitigate the impact of the development traffic, including improvements to public transport

(ii) Provision and implementation of a woodland, landscape and wildlife management plan for the Wildlife Heritage Site and other trees and woodland to be retained.

The Meteorological Office to carry out further detailed assessments in relation to traffic and transport matters (referred to in (i) above) and to consult Wokingham District Council on details of the above package of measures. The proposed development not to proceed until the package of measures has been agreed and endorsed by the Development Control Committee.

5.04 Also to the following conditions (for which WDC also to be consulted on the contents):

1. a) Approval of the details of the siting, design and external appearance of buildings (including works to the listed building), the means of access thereto and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced.

b) Application for approval of the reserved matters referred to in a) above shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

c) The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission or before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved whichever is the later.

REASON No such details have been submitted and standard time periods.

2. Construction work of any sort shall only take place within the area covered by the application between the hours of 7.00 am and 7.00 pm Monday to Fridays and 7.00 am to 1.30 pm Saturdays and no construction work shall take place on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

REASON To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring residents and the locality.

3. Provision shall be made to accommodate all site operatives' visitors' and construction vehicles loading, off-loading, parking and turning within the site during the construction period in accordance with details to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON In the interests of highway safety and convenience.

4. Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on the adjacent public highways in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

REASON In the interests of highway safety and convenience.

5.05 Informatives

1. The detailed design and siting of the proposed buildings should take into account concerns expressed about potential works to and the setting of the listed building and to the retention of important trees on the site.

2. The developing Department is advised that the Comments of the District Council are based on the proposal for a development of no more than 37,160 sq m floorspace in total.

3. The Developing Department is advised that the District Council would wish to ensure that the fabric and setting of the listed building are not materially harmed by the proposed development

4. Surface water source control measures should be carried out in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences.

5. No soakaways should be constructed such that they penetrate the water table, and they shall not in any event exceed 3 metres in depth below existing ground level.

6. No soakaways should be constructed in contaminated ground.

Additional Observation

5.06 Wokingham District Council supports the concerns expressed by the Shinfield Players about their future accommodation and supports the efforts of the applicants to continue to seek to resolve this issue.

Observation to the applicants and Bracknell Forest Borough Council

5.07 The applicants, in consultation with Bracknell Forest Borough Council, are recommended to propose a substantial reduction in the amount of B1 floorspace and a high number of residential units in the Planning Brief for the proposed future redevelopment of the London Road site.

5.08 Under Circular 18/84 the Council must forward copies of objections and representations received from third parties to the Meteorological Office, for their consideration as to whether the substance of any such representations is such that it would be appropriate for the Secretary of State to decide whether the development should proceed, and may decide to hold a public inquiry.

Site Description

5.09 This 17.6 ha. site is located on an elevated plateau and currently accommodates the Meteorological Office staff college which provides training facilities with ancillary residential accommodation. In the eastern part of the site there are single and two storey buildings of various ages including the main teaching and administrative accommodation in terrapin type buildings, restaurant, new accommodation block (Alexandra House), the Lodge which is a Grade II Listed Building and two former accommodation blocks. There is in the order of 7,400 m^2 floorspace in total on the site. To the west of the existing building is a large area of open grassland which is bounded on the west, north-west and south-west by woodland on sloping ground. The latter is a Wildlife Heritage Site (WHS).

5.10 Access to the site is from Whitley Wood Lane to the south to the main parking area adjacent. A public footpath passes adjacent to much of the southern boundary of the site. There is a former NAFFI building on the south of the site presently leased to the Shinfield Players and used as a theatre. There are also trees in the north-eastern part of the site, along Shinfield Road and between some of the buildings.

5.11 The ECMWF (European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting) is adjacent to the northern boundary of the site, and is separately accessed from the A327 Shinfield Road. There are residential properties to the west of the site at the bottom of the slope next to the woodland, and also opposite part of the eastern boundary of the site on the far side of Shinfield Road.

Proposal

5.12 Is to demolish all the existing buildings on the site, except for the original part of the Grade II Listed Building, the Lodge. The application is in outline with no reserved matters to be determined. The illustrative plans show a 33,351m² three storey main headquarters building approximately 15m high providing office, ancillary teaching and computer operations accommodation. This includes 29,283m² offices of which 4,645m² is for operations room. A 1,115m² social building is also proposed and a replacement residential block (2,266m²). The original part of the Lodge (428m²) would be retained and refurbished as a visitor centre and the modern additions to it demolished. A total of 37,160m² floorspace is proposed, and up to 1,500 staff are expected.

5.13 The main building would be constructed round a quadrangle. The external elevations are proposed glazing between masonry piers. The social facilities building would be a mainly double height single storey building accommodating social and sports facilities, a crèche and information centre. The decked car park would be a maximum 4.5m high set into the slope. It is stressed that the plans are illustrative and the detailed design could be very different.

5.14 Access to the site would be from the south-east via an enlarged roundabout at the junction of Shinfield Road and Whitley Wood Lane, with bus lay-by and loop immediately inside the site. The social building would be separately accessed off Whitley Wood Lane with its own car park, but also with direct access from inside the site. A 750 space two storey decked car park is proposed on the southern part of the open area of the site. Some trees would be lost, but additional planting is proposed. A Landscape Management Plan would be developed for the site (including the ancient woodland) in consultation with the Council.

Need for the Proposal

5.15 The information given in this section has been provided by the applicants' planning consultants. The Meteorological Office is an Executive Agency to the MOD and has operated as a trading fund since April 1996. As the UK's National Meteorological Service it operates at the forefront of scientific and technological development, and occupies a world leading position in meteorology and climatology with an expanding and increasingly global customer base. The Meteorological Office employs about 1,400 staff in the area. Most are currently based in Bracknell at the main London Road site, at other buildings nearby in urban Bracknell, at Beaufort Park (Easthampstead) and at Shinfield Park.

5.16 The Meteorological Office need to relocate to a single new site because the existing London Road offices are outdated, in need of repairs, are inefficient and unsuited to modern working requirements. Having staff spread across several sites is inefficient and makes communication difficult. Redevelopment of the London Road site would be unlikely to provide sufficient accommodation and would require temporary alternative accommodation. This would be highly

disruptive to the Meteorological Office's operation. There is a need to upgrade specialist computer facilities in early 2003 which requires new accommodation by the end of 2002.

5.17 Shinfield Park is put forward because it would strengthen ties with the adjacent ECMWF and links with Reading University, creating a 'centre of excellence' for meteorology and environmental sciences.

5.18 The Meteorological Office is also consulting with Bracknell Forest Borough Council under Circular 18/84 with regard to the construction of a similar, alternative headquarters building at their Beaufort Park site. (Beaufort Park is sited north of Nine Mile Ride and east of Old Wokingham Road in Bracknell Forest Borough Council). It is understood that other sites elsewhere in the country are also being investigated. Following both consultations, the Meteorological Office will consider their position with regard to relocation. At present relocation away from the Reading/Bracknell area has not been considered in detail, nor have other sites in the locality not owned by the Meteorological Office. The future use of the Meteorological Office's London Road, Bracknell site will be the subject of a Planning Brief to be prepared in conjunction with Bracknell Forest Borough Council. It is envisaged that a mixed use redevelopment could take place on the site, including opportunities for new housing.

5.19 Regarding the comments of the JSPU in relation to other possible alternative sites, the consultants have advised that a suitable relocation site for the Met. Office requires a site which can accommodate the amount of office floorspace proposed (together with the ancillary residential and social accommodation) which must also be secure (due to the Met. Office's inclusion within the MoD) and immediately available. To the knowledge of Bracknell Forest B C no other site which meets the above requirements is available in Bracknell. The availability of sites in the context of the 'Planning Commitments for Employment Uses Survey' undertaken in March 1999 for the main Berkshire towns of Reading, Bracknell, Wokingham and Maidenhead was also examined, but found to contain no alternative site which would readily meet all of the Met. Office's identified criteria.

'The Bid Process'

5.20 As the Meteorological Office is a government property and the proposal is above a threshold level, they have to seek a private partner with a view to design/build/ manage the project on the site, on an alternative site or existing alternative suitable premises. This has been done but the selection of a partner is unlikely to be finally confirmed until April 2001. Until a partner has been selected, the proposal is only illustrative and is likely to alter depending on the partner. The amount of floorspace proposed is the maximum required and a subsequent detailed application could propose less.

5.21 The following documents accompany the application: Planning Statement, Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Transport Assessment.

5.22 **Consultations**

- *Shinfield Parish Council :* Recognise the importance of the Meteorological Office but raise concerns (letter attached).

- *Earley Town Council :* Recognise the importance of the Meteorological Office but raise concerns (letter attached).

- *Joint Strategic Planning Unit :* Letter attached.

- *Reading Borough Council :* Object (letter attached).

- *Bracknell Forest Borough Council :* Letter attached.

- *CPRE :* Concerned highway provisions are inadequate.

- *Letter of objection (41 Woodside Way) :* Due to scale, proposal is not 'low level' development in line with the Structure Plan and the area is already suffering from a superheated economy, building is unsympathetic, will exacerbate traffic congestion, car park too large, tree loss, loss of Shinfield Players, a social club would cause noise and disturbance outside normal hours, there are suitable alternative sites at Green Park.

- *Letter of objection (37 Woodside Way) :* Concern workers would park on residential roads.

- *Highway Officer :* It is acknowledged by both the Highway Authority and the Applicant that the highway network in the vicinity of this site is inadequate in its current layout to accommodate the likely level of additional traffic that will be generated by this development. However, the applicant proposes major highway infrastructure improvements along with a Green Travel Plan to mitigate the development traffic to a level whereby nil detriment will be caused, with additional benefits to peak hour congestion. Although a number of issues are yet to be resolved, the Highway Authority can confirm at this stage that the principle of development can be accepted subject to further detailed assessment and consideration of the necessary infrastructure improvements to both the highway network and public transport to make the development acceptable. It is intended that once these outstanding issues are finalised they will be reported back to the next available Committee for consideration.

- *English Heritage :* Would wish to comment on the proposed demolition of the southern wing of The Lodge and on details of repair works to the exposed walls of the remaining building. Comments that the footprint appears extremely large for the site and for the 18th century Lodge it will abut.

- *Conservation Officer :* Would wish to comment on the proposed works to the listed building and on the details of the proposed design and siting of the proposed buildings in relation to the setting of the listed building.

- *Environment Agency :* No objection subject to conditions.
- *Ecologist :* Broadly endorses the ecological appraisal. Recommends an agreement covering a Woodland and Wildlife Management Plan.
- *Police Architectural Liaison Officer :* No objection in principle.
- *Consultant Archaeologist :* Does not require any archaeological investigation.
- *Tree Officer :* Recommends that the detailed layout is designed to minimise the loss of any important trees.
- *Ramblers Association :* Would like to see a more attractive boundary to the footpath than the current high mesh fence and razor wire, and public access to the woodland.

Appraisal

5.23 Main issues are:

A. Principle of Proposal - Land Use Allocation : (BSP Policy LD1; Loddon Area Local Plan: Policies LTV1, LS2; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policies WOS3, WBE20).

B. Principle of Proposal - Employment Policies : (Berkshire Structure Plan: Policy BU1; Loddon Area Local Plan: Policy LE2; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policy WEM4; RPG9, SERPLAN).

C. Traffic, Transport and Highway Issues (Berkshire Structure Plan: Policies T1-T6; Loddon Area Local Plan: Policies LT5, LT6, LT8, LT9 and LT11; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policies WT1, WT2, WT3, WT6 and WT7; PPG13).

D. Physical and Visual Impact (including effect on the Listed Building, trees and wildlife): (Berkshire Structure Plan: Policies EN1, EN4, EN8; Loddon Area Local Plan: Policies LBE1, LBE2, LBE17, LC9; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policies WBE1, WHE10, WHE11, WNC4).

E. Shinfield Players (Berkshire Structure Plan: Policy R6; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policy WIC1).

F. Services and Infrastructure Contributions : (Berkshire Structure Plan: Policy LD6; Loddon Area Local Plan: Policy LPS1; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policy WOS4).

G. Concerns of the Parish Council and Local Residents.

A. **Principle of Proposal - Land Use Allocation**

5.24 The site is within the settlement boundary in the Loddon Area Local Plan and Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft). The site is also covered by 'low density' Policies LS2 and WBE20. However, it was agreed by the Environmental Services Committee of 22.03.99 as part of the pre-Local Plan inquiry changes to delete Policy WBE20 in order to "take account of the strategy to make the best use of land already developed". In view of this, and that the proposal is to site buildings so as to retain the majority of the parkland and woodland setting, it is considered that there is no objection in principle in land use allocation terms to the proposal.

B. **Principle of Proposal - Employment Policies**

5.25 The key policy is Berkshire Structure Plan Policy BU1. The Berkshire Structure Plan does not propose any major new employment allocations but gives flexibility for development beyond the existing commitments. Policy BU1 states that permission will normally be granted for business development where it meets at least one of the four criteria. It is considered that the proposal satisfies criterion (iii) as it would meet the needs of an existing firm in Berkshire.

5.26 Policy BU1 then states that this is

"provided that it does not give rise (either by itself or cumulatively with other such schemes) to:

- *pressures for housing development additional to the provision in this Plan; or*
- *transport problems, having regard to the capacity of the transport network, the rate at which the transport strategy is being implemented and accessibility by public transport."*

These two issues are addressed in paragraphs 5.32-5.44 below.

5.27 Policy BU1 also states that account should be taken of the amount of suitable land and premises available and the rate of completions and occupations of premises.

5.28 Loddon Area Local Plan Policy LE2 has been overtaken by Berkshire Structure Plan Policy BU1 and Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft) Policy WEM4. Policy WEM4 is the local plan equivalent of Policy BU1, and requires compliance with it. It also requires there is no net loss of floorspace catering for certain types of use or need. The proposal complies with this latter point.

<u>Policy background to potential additional pressures on housing and transport infrastructure</u>

5.29 Berkshire Structure Plan Policy BU1 requires a careful approach towards employment generating development additional to current commitments. This stemmed from RPG9 (March 1994) (Regional Planning Guidance Note) which

stated that a reducing rate of development was appropriate in the western sector of the South-East to enable infrastructure and services to catch up.

5.30 Regional Planning Guidance Note 9 (RPG9) is currently under review, with SERPLAN seeking to impose similar policies on the western sector to discourage inessential development which is seen as fuelling unsustainable development pressures. However, this approach was rejected at the EIP (Examination in Public) with the suggestion that problems relating to traffic congestion and labour shortages be tackled positively by:

"the improvement of local public transport, the elimination of congestion hot-spots and by new house building (including the provision of affordable homes) within sustainable travelling distance. As a matter of general policy, neither congestion nor labour supply should be used as a reason for frustrating the proper elevation of the regional economy to world class."

(Report of the Panel into the draft Regional Planning Guidance for the South East, September 1999, paragraph 4.32).

5.31 The public consultation Draft RPG for the South East (March 2000) endorses this approach. However, this is not yet adopted policy, nor is there a new Berkshire Structure Plan or Draft Berkshire Structure Plan based on this approach.

Potential pressure on housing

5.32 At least initially, Meteorological Office staff would be expected to travel to Shinfield Park from their existing homes, which are mainly located in and around Bracknell. (The Meteorological Office would not pay any relocation expenses as the distance between their existing premises and Shinfield Park is below the threshold for such payments). The proposal itself is therefore not expected to give rise to any significant immediate pressure on housing. Over time staff could be expected to increasingly live nearer to Shinfield Park, but at a rate of change in which they would be gradually absorbed into the more locally based housing stock.

5.33 The more pertinent issue is what would happen to the vacated premises in Bracknell. The Meteorological Office's existing London Road premises are freehold and comprise about 21,000m² floorspace on 1.78 ha. The Meteorological Office and their consultants are currently discussing a Planning Brief for redevelopment of this site for mixed uses including offices and residential units. The remaining 6 buildings in urban Bracknell are leased and comprise about 9,000m² floorspace. The Meteorological Office would not be able to control their future use.

5.34 Therefore, to avoid significant additional pressure on the Central Berkshire housing supply, it is considered important that redevelopment of the London Road site comprises a high proportion of residential units and a low proportion of offices. It is therefore considered that Wokingham District Council's observations on the current application should include a recommendation to this effect.

5.35 Regarding the comments of the JSPU in relation to other possible alternative sites, the consultants have advised that they have not been able to identify any

alternative sites that would meet all the Met. Office's requirements, and the Council is not aware of any such sites either.

C. **Transport**

Roads

5.36 The site is located at the intersection of two Distributor roads, the A327 which forms part of the Primary Distributor Road network and is defined as a 'road of more than local importance' within the Berkshire Structure Plan, and the B3270 Earley Outer peripheral Road (EOPR). It is accepted by both the applicant and the Highway Authority that during peak periods the existing mini roundabout junctions connecting the A327 with the EOPR are operating over capacity and results in extensive queuing and delays, particularly during the morning peak period. These queues can extend a considerable length with northbound queues on the A327 regularly extending south beyond the roundabout junction with Hyde End Road. Access to the development is proposed by the introduction of a fourth arm to the northern most roundabout and considerably increasing its size.

5.37 The Transport Assessment (TA) submitted in support of the proposal identifies that the net increase of additional vehicle trips on the network as a result of the development will be 570 (two way) during the morning period and 394 (two way) during the evening peak. In terms of the distribution of this traffic, the TA assumes that during the morning peak 75% of this traffic will be travelling from the east along the EOPR, 7.9% from the south along the A327, 14% travelling from the north along the A327 and 3% from Whitley Wood Lane. Whilst the majority of the additional traffic will impact on the EOPR, this will clearly have an adverse affect on some of the existing links to the two roundabouts, in particular the northbound queue along the A327.

5.38 In order to mitigate this additional traffic, the applicant proposes 2 options for major junction improvements. Option 1 involves simply enlarging both roundabouts, whereas Option 2 proposes enlarging both roundabouts and providing a link road which in effect extends the EOPR to link up with Whitley Wood Lane. The modelling exercise carried out, shows that option 2 will offer most benefit overall. It is however important that the Authority does not commit at this stage to any scheme until all options have been considered fully, but accept in principle improvements can be carried out as part of the development that would mitigate the impact of the development traffic.

Car Parking

5.39 The proportion of on site car parking proposed does not appear to differ significantly from the existing demand as it represents approximately 50% provision for staff. In the context of guidance within the draft PPG13, new development should not be designed to accommodate existing parking demand but seek to reduce the availability of parking so as to encourage means of travel other than by private car. It is considered that on site parking should be used more as a demand management tool whereby car parking provision should be gradually reduced in line with targets and aims of a Green Travel Plan (GTP).

Pedestrian/cycleway access

5.40 Pedestrian/cycleway access is to form an integral part of this development. Although the applicant proposes a Toucan crossing on the A327 to the west of the site, there are still a number of outstanding issues relating to improving pedestrian/cycle access, in particular, the possibility of upgrading the existing footpaths links running through the site for shared use for cycleways. This would provide good links to the residential areas

to the north west of the site. The applicant has identified proposals for new/improved cycleways as contained within Local Transport Plan and Reading Urban Area Package, but has offered no financial contributions to bring these schemes forward. Discussions are continuing with the applicant on this issue, however good accessibility by foot and bike are considered to be a fundamental part of this proposal.

Public Transport

5.41 Improved public transport in the form of a shuttle bus linking the site to the local stations is also proposed. Whilst this is welcomed, there is concern as to whether the anticipated modal shift/patronage is realistic. There is also a concern that improvements to public transport should not be exclusively for Met Office employees and that improved public transport facilities should be integrated within the existing services that are currently available. Discussions are still continuing with the applicant on these issues.

5.42 Green Travel Plan

The GTP proposed by the Met Office is also welcomed although targets and more measures of restraint, including possible staged reduction in car parking as the GTP develops should be included. These issues can be agreed at a later stage.

5.43 The internal arrangement of the site is not an issue at this stage, as the detailed scheme may alter significantly to that shown on the drawings. In any event, there is sufficient land within the site to ensure adequate access roads/turning facilities for all vehicles including and public transport/delivery/service vehicles.

Conclusion on transport issues

5.44 It is recommended that no objection be raised in relation to traffic and transportation matters but that the development should not proceed until such time as the further detailed assessments have been carried out and an appropriate package of measures to mitigate the impact of the development traffic, including improvements to public transport have been agreed and endorsed by the Development Control Committee.

D. **Physical and Visual Impact**

5.45 As already explained in the section 'proposal', the proposed development is in outline with no reserved matters to be determined. In view of the 'bid process' which the Meteorological Office has to go through, the proposed details are very much indicative, and the main purpose of the current application is to establish the principle of development of the proposed amount on the site.

General Impact of Proposal

5.46 The site is inside the settlement boundary but the southern and south-eastern boundaries are adjacent to the settlement boundary. The character of the plateau area on the west side of Shinfield Road up to the Reading boundary is essentially one of the larger buildings in parkland settings (Crosfields School, the ECMWF and ex-Berkshire County Council buildings). Therefore, although the proposed building would be a large one, a building of this scale would generally be in keeping with the character of the area and the size of the site. Apart from the decked car park, the indicative layout plan shows that most of the built form would be sited on the area of existing built development on the eastern part of the site.

Views from outside the site

5.47 The indicative proposals show the main part of the proposed headquarters building would be 15m high. The section drawings show that the existing tree belts would largely screen this building and the proposed car park and relocated Alexandra House from views from Shinfield Road, from the lower ground to the west of the site in the vicinity of Woodside Way, from the longer distance view from junction 11 of the M4, and from most of the public footpath on the south boundary of the site.

5.48 The building would be seen from the proposed access, though could be partially screened in the longer term by planting on the internal roundabout. The proposed social building would also be partially seen from Whitley Wood Lane through its own access point. However, the existing Barclay House and Shinfield Players buildings can already be seen from Whitley Wood Lane and proposed additional planting would help screen these views.

Listed Building

5.49 Potential concerns have been expressed by English Heritage and the Council's Listed Buildings' Officer about proposed works to the Listed Building and the effect on the proposed headquarters building on its setting. These concerns would be expected to be taken into account in the design and siting of the proposed buildings in the subsequent detailed application.

Trees and wildlife

5.50 A tree survey and assessment have been submitted. The indicative plans show retention of the main areas of woodland and retention of most of the higher category trees. Any concerns that the Tree Officer expresses about the proposed loss of any individual trees can be expected to be taken into account in the subsequent detailed application. The proposed woodland and wildlife management plan would be expected to provide satisfactory management of the woodland areas and trees on the site and for the protection of wildlife and habitats.

Conclusion on physical and visual impact

5.51 The proposals are indicative but it is considered that they illustrate that in principle a main headquarters building of the size proposed and ancillary accommodation could be acceptably accommodated on the site. The subsequent detailed design and siting proposals would need to ensure that proposed works to, and the setting of, the listed building are acceptable and do not result in the removal of important trees which should be retained.

E. **Shinfield Players** (letter attached)

5.52 The Shinfield Players are currently accommodated in an ex-NAFFI terrapin building on a 6 month lease. The lease has been renewed every 6 months for some years. The Meteorological Office have advised that they consulted the Shinfield Players about the proposal two months before it was submitted to Wokingham District Council and offered them joint-use space in the proposed social building.

5.53 The Shinfield Players, however, consider this unsatisfactory as they wish to own/control their own building so that they can put on performances every night in a run, and set up the stage and retain it through the run. The Shinfield Players are pressing for one of the 3 options listed in their letter to be provided (remain in situ, re-erect the building elsewhere on the site, or the Meteorological Office to provide a new theatre).

5.54 The Meteorological Office and their consultants, however, have explained that the existing site of the Shinfield Players' building is the most suitable site for the proposed social building as it can be separately accessed and used without causing significant security problems regarding the main building and part of the site. They also consider the proposed social building would be more visually in keeping with the redeveloped site.

5.55 The Meteorological Office have also explained that ultimately the Shinfield Players have no right to stay on the site and if the Meteorological Office do not relocate here, then the site is expected to be disposed of, and it would be up to the new owner/operator as to their future. However, the Meteorological Office have said they recognise they have a social responsibility to the Shinfield Players, hope that the matter can be resolved, and that this could mean offering them assistance to relocated off-site. However, it would not mean entirely financing a new replacement building, as the Meteorological Office is publicly accountable for its expenditure and consider that they would be unlikely to be able to justify such expenditure.

5.56 Policy WIC1 states that permission will not be granted for proposals that involve the loss of community facilities unless the authority is satisfied that there is no need for the particular facility or alternative provision is available nearby. Whilst the future of the Shinfield Players has not yet been resolved, this issue should be considered in the overall context and circumstances of the proposal. It is considered that the Council should express its support in principle for the Shinfield Players and to support a resolution of the issue that is acceptable to both parties. (The Shinfield Players' representations will be forwarded to the Secretary of State.)

F. **Services and Infrastructure Contributions**

5.57 Provision of, and contributions towards, highway improvements have been covered in Section C above. The proposed social building would provide a crèche facility which is expected to be operated by a crèche operator. The social building would also provide sports and social facilities for staff and any spare capacity could be let out to local community groups. The Meteorological Office would continue to provide public access to their Meteorological Library in the relocated premises and to provide source material etc. for schools.

G. **Concerns of the Parish Councils and local residents**

5.58 The issues of traffic and housing pressures, trees, ecology, building design and the Shinfield Players have been addressed above. Regarding any potential disturbance from the social club, this is shown to be sited on the site of the

existing Shinfield Players building who put on evening performances. The only residential properties nearby are the two caretakers dwellings at Foster Wheeler, which are vacant. The proposed social building would be approximately 400m from the nearest residential properties in Woodside Way. It is therefore considered that the proposed social building is unlikely to cause unacceptable levels of nuisance. (A letter has been sent to Shinfield Parish Council explaining that the report to the Development Control Committee on 28 June was an initial report for information only, that further comments could be accepted and that the application would be considered again by the Committee for determination of observations to be forwarded).

Overall conclusions

5.59 The Meteorological Office is an important organisation both nationally and locally and it is essential they relocate to new headquarter premises. National and local policies in principle support such proposals, subject to their not giving rise to unacceptable effects.

5.60 The chief issue of concern locally is the potential generation of additional traffic onto the local road network which is already congested at peak times. Effective proposals for, and implementation of, the Green Travel Plan, together with the proposed highway works and contributions are considered essential to avoid unacceptable levels of exacerbation of existing traffic problems.

5.61 The proposed development is also likely to generally result in increased pressure on housing in Central Berkshire through the 'knock-on' effect of re-occupation of the Meteorological Office's existing premises in Bracknell. This can be expected to be off-set only to some degree by including a significant number of residential units and significant reduction in office floorspace in their future redeveloped premises at London Road.

5.62 It is considered that the future detailed proposals can be sited and designed so as to take account of concerns regarding the Listed Building and trees.

5.63 The future of the Shinfield Players remains unresolved. Whilst this is a cause of local concern, taken in isolation, it is considered not of sufficient weight to cause the Council itself to object to the proposed development. However, it is considered that the Council should express its support in principle for the Shinfield Players and to support a resolution of the issue that is acceptable to both parties.

5.64 It is therefore considered that the Council should express its support for the proposed development and not to forward an objection in principle subject to the proposed legal agreement, conditions, informatives and observations set out in paragraphs 5.03-5.07 of this report under 'Suggested Action'.

Financial Implications

5.65 See main body of the report.

Environmental Implications

5.66 See main body of the report.

Consultation with Parish and Town Councils/Voluntary Sector Organisations

5.67 See main body of the report.

Equal Opportunities Implications

5.68 The proposed development, including the social building, would be expected to take account of the needs of the disabled at the detailed design stage.

Community Safety Implications

5.69 The site would be a secure installation.

Time Constraints

5.70 The Met. Office's time constraints are set out in the report

Background Papers	Dept. Where held
Application O/2000/1714	Environmental Services

Angela Odell

Shinfield
Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs. J Barnes, 36 Ryhill Way, Earley, Reading, Berkshire. RG6 4AZ
Tel/Fax: 0118 9547115

15th July 2000

Mrs A Odell
Case Officer
Wokingham District Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire

Dear Mrs Odell

Application No: 0/2000/1714 – Outline Proposals for Met Office facilities at Shinfield Park.

At the meeting of our Planning and Transportation committee on 5th July, it was resolved to record the comments below in respect of the above outline application in our parish. The proposals contained therein do not appear in the District's Local Plan but will have a major impact on our community and environment, and it is upon these impacts that we have concentrated our comments. However, we deplore the fact that we have been given only days to comment on a four volume submission. We must also record our grave concern that the application went before a Development Control Sub-Committee on 28th June, prior to our comments being called for by 14th July. For that determining committee not to have the local council comments before them, prior to making a decision on such a major development is unacceptable.

1) **Introductory Remarks** – Whilst recognising the applicant as a first class Globally acclaimed organisation that would bring prestige to the area with support from many local residents, we have major concerns about the application as submitted and wish to record a number of challenges as detailed below. Our members were also irritated by the constant reference to the location being in Reading (with even media focus being on the views of Reading MPs when it is outside their area), when in fact it lies entirely in our parish, in the district of Wokingham.

Continued....

2) **Traffic**- The implications of traffic generation by siting 1,400 new jobs in a full employment area which already has a road system operating over-capacity is a prime concern. The entire Transport Assessment whilst impressive in magnitude being an inch thick, is of little value assessing traffic generation and impact as it is essentially based on the 1996 Baseline Model, which is in itself flawed and inappropriate for predicting the future. This fact was established as Part 1 of the recent Public Inquiry into the District Local Plan, where it was used simply as a tool for making comparisons.

The base Model was developed for one purpose only: to assess and compare traffic mitigation measures proposed by the three development consortia competing to build 2,500 houses south of the M4. It was made clear, at the time of its construction that it was not suitable for predicting future traffic conditions, as the database did not reflect actual current Origin and Destination figures. The statistics used had been adjusted downwards to enable the Model to run, as otherwise, modeling a system at capacity with the software available, was not possible. Furthermore, the Baseline Model should not be used for predicting future traffic, as it cannot predict queue lengths, it cannot predict waiting times and it cannot model the peak-hour load spreading.

Therefore, basing conclusions, such as traffic levels and flows at Junction 11, on this Model, is a useless exercise. In addition, it was known that there was significant peak load spreading and latent demand, which could not be assessed correctly. It is noted that in the traffic analysis that peak load spreading has not been taken into account and no consideration of latent demand mentioned. It is clear that considering a single peak hour period in the case is not sufficient. Peak loading exists over a longer period than one hour and the peak hour is certainly not conveniently defined by an hour on the clock. Also, any communting analysis must take account of travelling time, which this does not.

The analysis provided does not consider both best and worse case traffic scenarios, nor does it look at the necessary 15 years ahead to prudently consider what effects the further growth in this important strategic developments area will have. We consider these are minimal and essential considerations for the community, which has long term aspirations for their living here.

In considering the traffic effects, it has been suggested that the 2,500 houses to be built south of the M4 will be available to the Met Office staff. This is NOT the case. These houses are being built to satisfy the needs of Reading's 20,000 jobs at and around Green Park. There will therefore be long term commuting for at least 750 of the Met Office employees. This is totally out of line with Government guidance on these matters and out of line with the emerging Local Transport Plan.

Continued...

We welcome the commitment to producing a Green Travel Plan which must be part of any Full Application and should include undertakings to support bus services from Winnersh Triangle to Shinfield Park, which would run through our community at Shinfield Rise, to the benefit of our parishioners. Furthermore, whilst endorsing the logic behind restricted parking provision, we are extremely concerned that this could lead to indiscriminate parking on the surrounding unrestricted road system, to the detriment of our residents.

Were the Council mindful to approve the application, major contributions should be sought to local infrastructure improvements including the funding of the proposed Option 2 Link Road Scheme, with a preferred siting alongside the motorway, rather that an proposed through the middle of a valuable wildlife habitat bounded by Whitley Wood Lane and the M4 motorway.

A final point on traffic issues is that in page 17, para 5.02 of the Planning Statement quotes from the Structure Plan, that in the interests of flexibility, new development may be permissible, where they do "not duly add transport problems of pressures for housing development". Our members are of the firm view that this proposal will do both.

3) **Economic and Employment Considerations** – There would appear to be an incomplete consideration of the other planning applications for the area. Noticeably absent are considerations for all other local commercial developments, which could generate additional 2,500 jobs within one kilometer of the Met Office site: these include Foster Wheeler plus the NIRD site, Church Farm and the Advanced Research Centre. In addition a further 25,000 new jobs will be generated within three kilometers of the site at green park, Reading International Business Park, Reading Gate and the Oracle Centre. As there is full employment in Shinfield, all these jobs will have to be filled by commuters. This scenario must be accurately assessed using the correct tools and current data.

Shinfield Parish is already an extremely stressed economic area. There is a total imbalance in housing provision compared to employment provision. House prices are now totally beyond households on below £30,000to £50,000pa. There is totally inadequate affordable housing provision. The communities are rapidly becoming unbalanced with the numbers of teachers, nurses, tradesman, local government workers and other modest income work groups declining. Surveys have indicated that there is less than 1% unemployment in the area. There is therefore no requirement for additional jobs.

The parish population is already forecast by WDC to grow by an unacceptable 70% in the period 1997-2006 and will rapidly create even more imbalance, as there will be few if any additional lower income group families able to migrate to this 'hot spot'. The planned provision of 500 affordable houses will be taken up by local residents already on the house waiting lists made longer by years of neglect in this sector of the housing market whilst planning has been developer led. Adding further to this growth requirement in this period is clearly not acceptable. Indeed it is even possible, given the need to build and sell at rates in excess of 500 houses a year.

Continued...

4) **Ecology** – The site has very considerable biodiversity, with two types of deer seen regularly, a wide ranging bird population in the ancient woodland which contains the rich flora associated with such sites and will be designated a Wildlife heritage Site (WHS). A substantial buffer zone around the WHS will be required and this needs to be reviewed.

Poor if any provision is made for wildlife corridors to and from the WHS. Within close proximity are two other undeveloped sites, Pearmans Corpse and the wildlife area to the south of Foster Wheeler building, between Whitley Wood and the M4 motorway.

The site is on the prominent SW to NE ridge line with its unpredictable hydrogeology. As the applicant's Ecological Appraisal concedes, the site has been neglected over a long period of time and numerous gullies and run-offs on the north west slopes have caused problems over the years and are clearly not understood by the current land occupiers. Despite local representations, the MOD has failed to respond to resident's fears, and flooding and subsidence caused by water run-off from the ridge has been experienced. It would appear that deliberate failure to keep gullies clear for the purpose of their creation and in some cases deliberately blocking them, has been the practice over many years. This problem has not been addressed and with further development of the site will inevitably be worse.

The site is very well wooded and it would be an unacceptable loss to see numerous mature trees unnecessarily sacrificed. We are concerned about the removal of groups of trees as summarised on page 26 without knowledge of the numbers in each group. However, it is recognised that some trees will inevitably have to go. Careful monitoring of this will be needed and permission for named individuals from the parish to have access to the site for this purpose is requested. Access should be provided on request at 24 hours notice. All individuals would observe whatever safety regulations were in force at the time of inspection. We would urge that the perimeter screening, which we are encouraged to see is to be retained, should be improved for the benefit of residents in adjoining properties.

Finally on matters of ecology, we request that in any consideration of approval for this application, consideration should be given to imposing conditions opening up the areas of Ancient woodland for employment by members of the local community and general public.

5) **Building Design** – We trust that the visuals provided, depicting the proposed building perspectives (Typical Section & Elevation Option S4B) are authentic in terms of the portrayed roofline, with only a couple of slender masts. We consider that any further masts or antennae should be strictly controlled.

Continued...

6) **Shinfield Players Theatre** – Whilst passing reference, relating only to its removal, is made to the existence of this very significant local community facility which is established on the development site, scant regard is given in the proposals to its future well-being. Its future welfare is of paramount importance to this council and the assurances given by Mr Peter Ewins, the Chief Executive of the Met Office at a recent site visit to the current Bracknell facility, were well received by the local council members. Whilst we would wish to leave it to the management of the Shinfield Players to negotiate the details of any proposal for their future, we cannot over-emphasise our anxiety for their continuance.

7) **Section 106 Agreement** – In recognition of the major impact that this proposed development would have in the communities that we represent, we would expect that if the District Council is minded to grant permission, a significant 'developer contribution' would be negotiated with the applicant under Section 106 provision of the Act, taking particular regard to the 'Wish list' of benefits appropriate to our parish, submitted by this council.

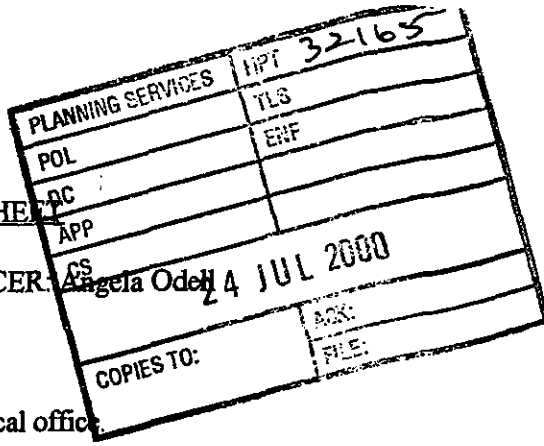
In conclusion, we seek assurances that our comments as detailed above, which have taken considerable time and effort by our members to compile, should be reported in full to members of the Development Control Sub-Committee, before any decision is taken.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Sampson

Mrs Tracy Sampson
Assistant Clerk (0118 9885315)

Copies to:
Mr M Bryant, Mr B Patman, Mr A Pollock – District Councilors
Mr H Hawes of Shinfield Players



TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATION SHEET

APPLICATION NO: F/2000/1714 PLANNING OFFICER: Angela Odell

PARISH: EARLEY (Shinfield Parish Application)

PROPOSAL: Erection of building for use as a meteorological office

ADDRESS: Shinfield Park

APPLICANT: The Met. Office

Thank you for allowing Earley Town Council the opportunity to comment on this application. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is an extremely prestigious proposal, of paramount concern to the Town Council is the amount of additional traffic which will be generated on a road infrastructure which is already extremely overstretched. Whilst the road improvements, which form part of this application are noted, it was felt that these improvements were flawed. Councillors felt that the proposed new roundabouts should be of a larger scale, and that an additional roundabout was required outside the entrance to the Foster Wheeler Building.

The Town Council is currently involved in compiling a Transport Policy for the Town, which is still at a very initial stage. However, one of the major problem areas which has been identified is the amount of through traffic through the Town and also the amount of congestion at the two access points onto the M4, i.e. junction 11 and junction 10 via the A329 and the Loddon Bridge junction. It was the intention of the Town Council that the document would be presented as a whole to the District Council. However, in view of this planning application and the other current application in this area at the former Shire Hall site, Councillors have requested that one of the proposals to be contained in the Transport Policy should now be given serious consideration by the District Council. This is the creation of a junction 10a onto the M4, which could be created at a suitable location off Lower Earley Way. Councillors felt that consideration could be given to making this junction access only, to avoid traffic leaving the motorway at this point and thus increasing the problem of through traffic in the Town. As previously stated, the Town Council's Transport Policy is at a very initial stage, and it is acknowledged that this suggestion requires considerable more research and thought. However, it is felt that the current applications being considered would give the District Council an ideal opportunity to seriously consider Councillors' suggestion of the creation of this additional junction onto the M4.

Of concern also to Councillors when they discussed this application was the increased pressure which would be created on the already over-stretched housing stock. It is acknowledged that some staff may not wish to relocate, although this will, of course, create its own problems in an increase in commuter traffic. However, this area of the District is already under pressure to allow more residential development on the very valuable green gaps on the Shinfield Parish boundary, and this proposal can only serve to increase this pressure.

Finally, Councillors noted with some concern the loss of the Shinfield Players Theatre. It is requested that, should the Development Control Sub-Committee be mindful to approve this application, a condition of the approval is that the Met Office satisfactorily negotiates with the Shinfield Players to ensure that suitable alternative accommodation is found for them. It is also requested that a condition be imposed requiring the running of shuttle buses between the site and the proposed park and ride scheme near to junction 11.

A copy of these observations has been forward to the Head of Engineering Services.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: 20 JUL 2000

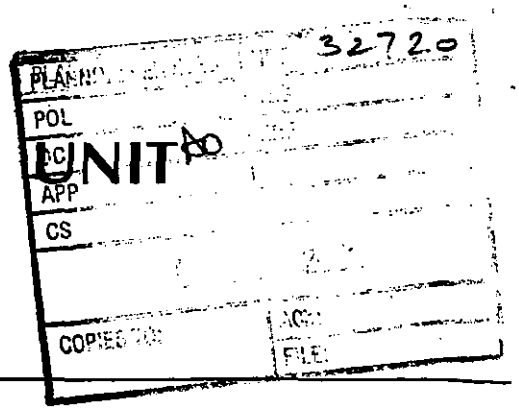
CLERK TO EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

The Berkshire Unitary Authorities'

JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING UNIT

St. Mary's House, c/o Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead SL6 1RF
Tel. 01628 796749 Fax. 01628 796739

Head of Strategic Planning and Transport: Stuart Hylton



Please ask for: Phil Gill
Direct Line: 01628 796518
Email: phillip.gill@rbwm.gov.uk
Our Ref: M/3/6
Your Ref: O/2000/1714

Angela Odell,
Planning Services,
Wokingham District Council,
PO Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
RG40 1WR.

4 August, 2000

Dear Angela,

Proposed Met Office Relocation to Shinfield Park

Thank you for consulting the Joint Unit on this proposal. I note that it is a consultation under Circular 18/84 and therefore not legally a planning application. For this reason I am not phrasing this letter in the normal form of object/not object; rather I am merely commenting on the issues raised and their relationship to strategic planning policy.

These comments have now been approved by the Chairman and Vice chairmen of the Joint Committee. Please ensure that these comments are passed on to the relevant Secretary of State.

Location

The location within an urban area and on a largely brownfield site with the potential for good access by non-car modes means that the proposal accords with Structure Plan Policies OS1 and LD1. However, I have seen no evidence that a sequential test has been carried out as required by PPG6 (paragraph 1.15). Only sites already owned by the applicant appear to have been examined as options for the proposed relocation (this site and Beaufort Park, Bracknell). PPG6 requires a much wider assessment to be undertaken. In this case a search for sites within the urban areas of Bracknell (including Amen Corner), Reading, Wokingham, Camberley and possibly Maidenhead would seem appropriate.

It is also important to note that permission should not be granted for development on both of the proposed sites. This would give tacit approval to the principle of commercial development on whichever site was not taken forward for the Met Office relocation. Certainly in the case of Beaufort Park this would be inappropriate.

Employment

The new Met Office building in itself would appear to accord with Policy BU1. As a development to meet the needs of an existing "firm" in Berkshire it accords with the criteria in the first part of the policy. On the assumption that the scheme is a straight relocation and involves no increase in staff across the Met Office's sites in Berkshire, then the second part of the policy, which seeks to ensure that extra housing and transport pressures are not created, would also be satisfied. Although there would be some transport pressures in the short term, with staff having longer journeys to work, this is likely to settle down over time.

My concern is with the future use of the site the Met Office plan to vacate in London Road, Bracknell. The above reasoning on BU1 will only be correct if there is no significant employment development on the London Road site once the relocation takes place. I understand that Bracknell Forest Borough Council is currently preparing a development brief for the London Road site, and I am hopeful that this will reflect the employment issues. I appreciate that this is outside of your Council's control, but it is a crucial issue which must be considered by the decision maker in this case, whom I understand to be the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Transport

A number of points in the Transport Assessment (TA) require further analysis or justification. Strategic matters are as follows.

The agents have agreed the principle of providing a Green Travel Plan, and this is welcomed. Given the large scale and potential impact of the development, the principles of such a Plan should be firmly established before any decision is taken to proceed with the development. In particular, staff surveys to establish travel needs and preferences will need to be carried out before the move. The Plan would benefit from incentives for staff to relinquish a parking space and from a commitment to the provision of real time public transport information, and should also contain a commitment to limit the number of car journeys to and from the site. Until the Plan is secured by legal agreement the proposal will conflict with Policy T1.

Provision for pedestrians and cyclists will need to be made in the design of the junctions, and a cycle route along Shinfield Road should be secured in advance of the development to satisfy Policies T2 and T3.

The TA appears to have overestimated the number of staff who would readily switch from car use to more sustainable modes. As a result there is insufficient attention given to parking management (on and off site), contrary to Policy T6. To comply with this policy there would need to be an indication as to what parking restrictions were to be imposed locally.

It will be essential for any transport proposals to be fully integrated with the Reading Urban Area Package and other developments in the local area. For instance, it may be advantageous to coordinate transport proposals such as shuttle buses with those for Foster Wheeler and the current application for development at the former Shire Hall.

I trust the above will be useful to you. I will be responding separately to Bracknell Forest Borough Council on the companion proposal to this one (relocation to Beaufort Park, Bracknell).

Yours sincerely,

P.A. Gill

Phillip Gill
Senior Planner

cc Martin Bourne, BFBC
Andrew Dawe, RBC

Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL

PL... VICES	RPT
POL	TLS
...	ENF
...P	
CS	33440
24 AUG 2000	
COPIES TO: AO	ACK:
	FILE:

Tony Lear
Director of Environment

Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 7TD
☎ 0118 939 0900
DX 40124 Reading (Castle Street)
Fax: 0118 958 9770
Minicom 𝒯 0118 939 0700

Our Ref: 00/00738/WOKADJ/AD

Mr J Mitchell (Development Control Manager)
Wokingham District Council
Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham RG40 1WR

Direct ☎ 0118 9390023

22 August 2000

Your contact is: **Andrew Dawe – Senior Planning Officer**

Dear Mr Mitchell

RE: Meteorological Office training college, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Reading. Proposal: Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as Meteorological Office (your ref. Angela Odell/O/2000/1714).

I refer to your letter dated 20th June 2000 consulting Reading Borough Council on the above planning application.

The proposal was considered by our Planning Applications Committee on 16th August 2000. The decision was taken to raises a holding objection to the proposal until the following issues have been adequately addressed: the applicant needs to demonstrate that a comprehensive assessment of suitable alternative sites closer to urban centres has been undertaken in accordance with the sequential approach; that appropriate measures, works and contributions have been agreed and secured by a tripartite legal agreement (WDC, RBC & Met. Office) to help achieve a balanced approach to transport matters in accordance with Policies LD5 and BU1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan and the Reading Urban Area Package; and a Green Travel Plan has been submitted to and has been agreed by Wokingham District Council in consultation with Reading Borough Council in accordance with Draft Revision PPG13 (appropriate measures, incentives, targets and reviews to be secured through a tripartite legal agreement with WDC, RBC & Met. Office). If these issues are not adequately addressed the Council believes that the proposal would be contrary to policies LD1 (Sustainable Development), BU1 (Assessment of Proposals for Further Business, Industrial, Distribution and Storage Development), T1 (Integrated Approach to Transport), T2 (Provision for Pedestrians), T3 (Provision for Cyclists), T6 (Control of On-Street and Off-Street Parking) of the Berkshire Structure Plan.

In the event that the Meteorological Office choose to relocate to Beaufort Park near Bracknell or elsewhere (including relocation of the Meteorological Office training college from Shinfield Park),

the Council would strongly urge Wokingham District Council to allocate the existing Shinfield Road site for housing at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with the objectives of PPG3 and the adopted Structure Plan.

In the event that the proposal is agreed by WDC and in the event that WDC and the applicants agree to enter into the legal agreement set out above, then it was agreed that officers of Reading Borough Council should enter into the legal agreement set out above to secure the appropriate transport measures, works and contributions and to secure a Green Travel Plan.

I have enclosed a copy of the report to the Planning Applications Committee for your information.

Yours sincerely

David Breeze
Planning Manager - Implementation

Planning & Transportation

Director of Planning & Transportation : George Kingston MA (Oxon) DipTP MRTPI
Borough Planning Officer : Mike Holmes BSc (Econ) DipTP MRTPI

This matter is being dealt with by: Nicky Linihan-Mardon Tel: 01344 351180

PLANNING SERVICES APPT 32863
DC ENF
APPP
CS
10 AUG 2000
COPIES TO: ACK:
FILE:

BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL

Time Square
Market Street
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG12 1JD
☎ 01344 424642
Fax 01344 351104
DX 33611 Bracknell
Minicom 01344 352045
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Our Ref: DC/6/3
Your Ref: Angela Odell 0/2000/1714

Environmental Services department,
Planning Services,
P.O. Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berkshire. RG40 1WR
F.A.O. Mrs. Angela Odell

7 August 2000

Dear Sirs,

Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield. Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

I refer to your letter of 20 June 2000 regarding the above and would thank you for the opportunity to comment.

In considering the proposals I would make the following observations:

- Careful consideration will need to be given to the strategic employment issues relating to the proposal, with regard being paid to Policy BU1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991 – 2006 and in particular the elements relating to additional housing pressure and transportation issues.

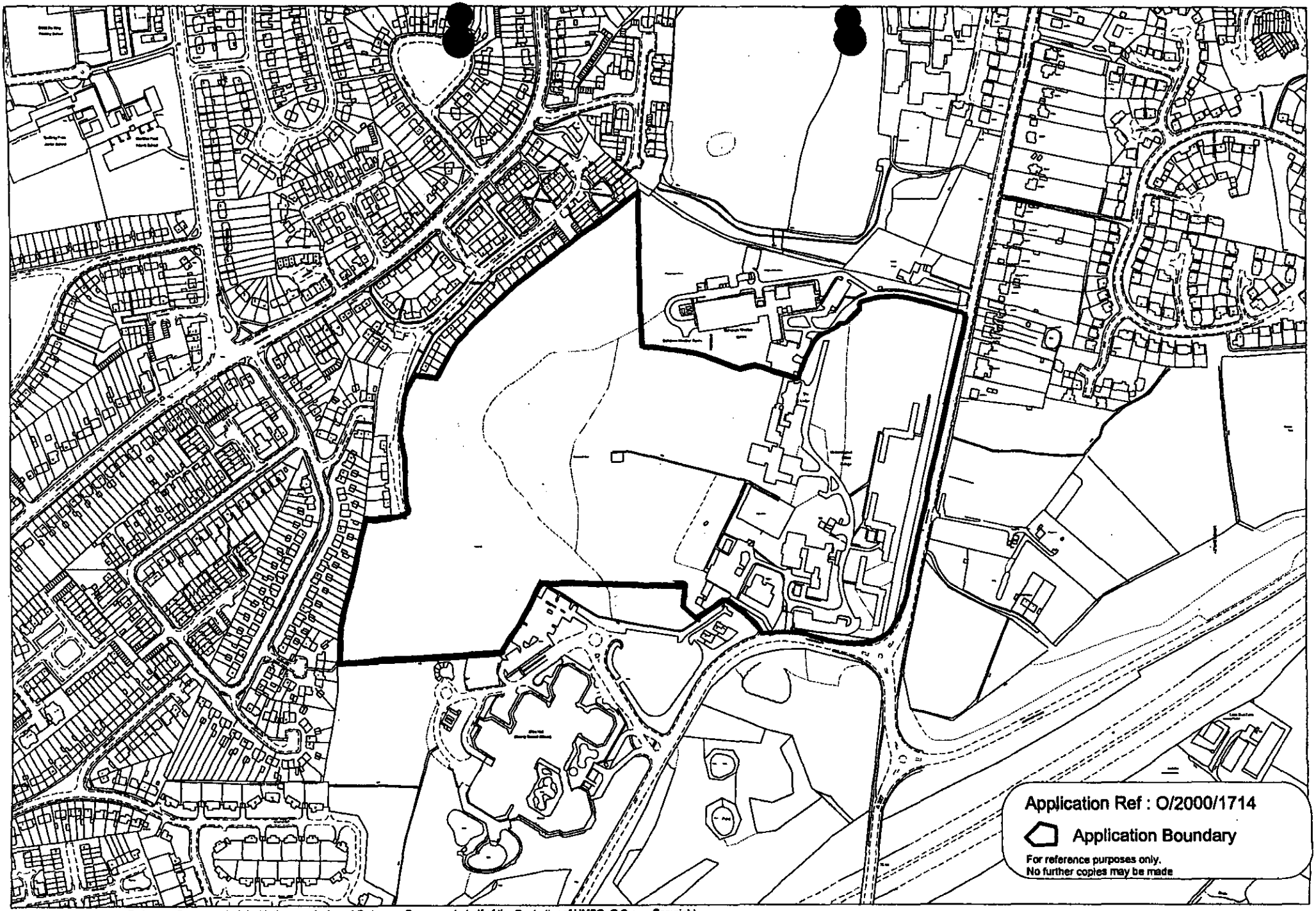
- It is noted that the Transport Assessment submitted in support of the proposals does not give any detailed consideration to the potential impacts on the highway network within the eastern Wokingham and western Bracknell areas. The Assessment provides information on the residential locations of staff currently working for the Meteorological Office. A significant proportion of these live within Bracknell Forest Borough to the south of the town centre. Changes on local commuting patterns with respect to car borne journeys are likely to have some impact on the local highway network in the above mentioned area during peak hours. This is of particular relevance bearing in mind the close proximity to the proposed housing allocation in the emerging Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan at Peacock Farm. In order to limit any impact it is vital that a Company Travel Plan is developed and implemented on first occupation, should the development take place, and that suitable monitoring is carried out. The Borough Council would welcome the opportunity for input into the development of such a plan.

I hope this is of assistance. If you wish to discuss this matter further then please do not hesitate to contact my colleague Nicky Linihan-Mardon on 01344 351180.

Yours sincerely

995

for **Mike Holmes**
Borough Planning Officer



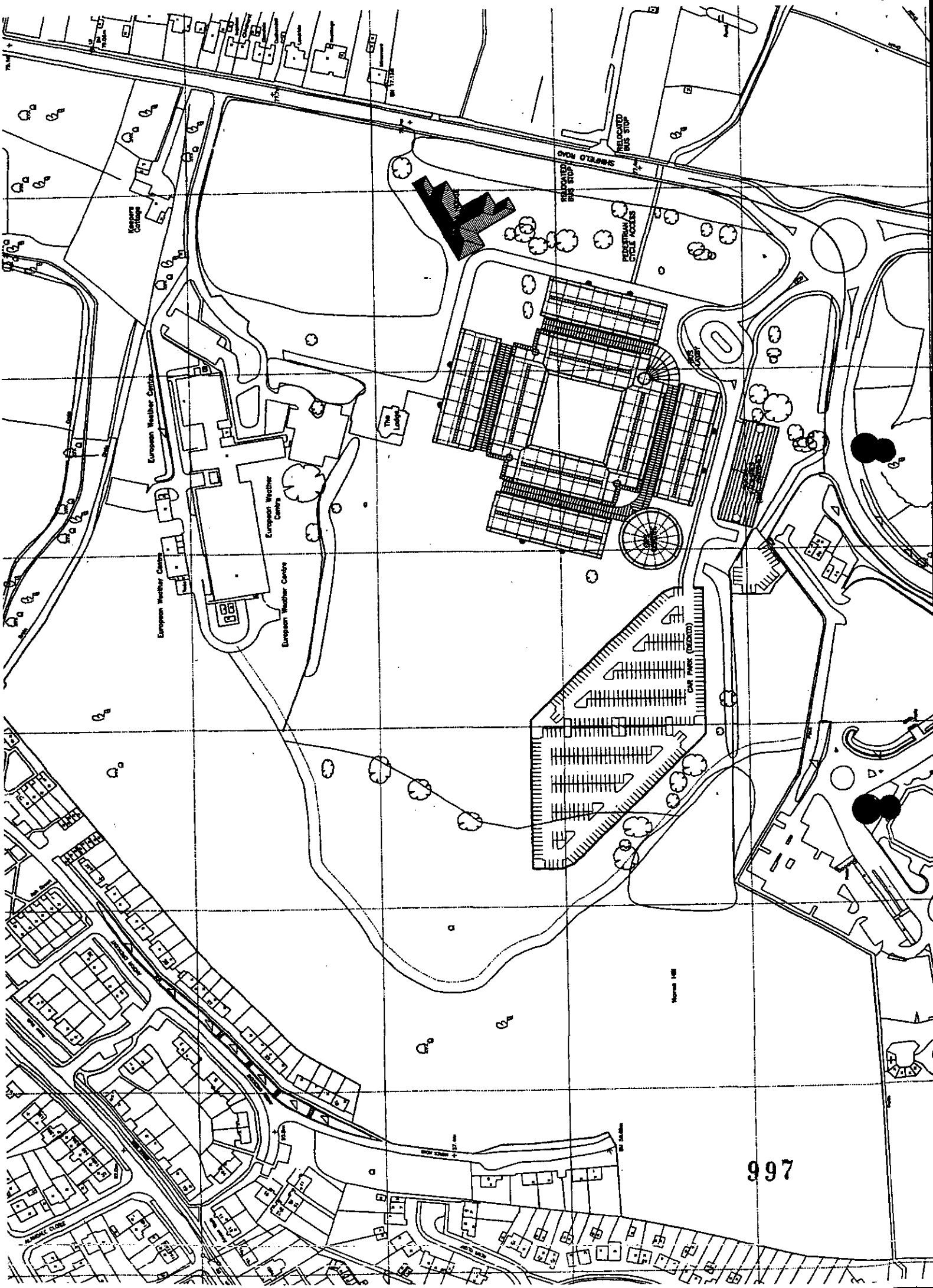
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

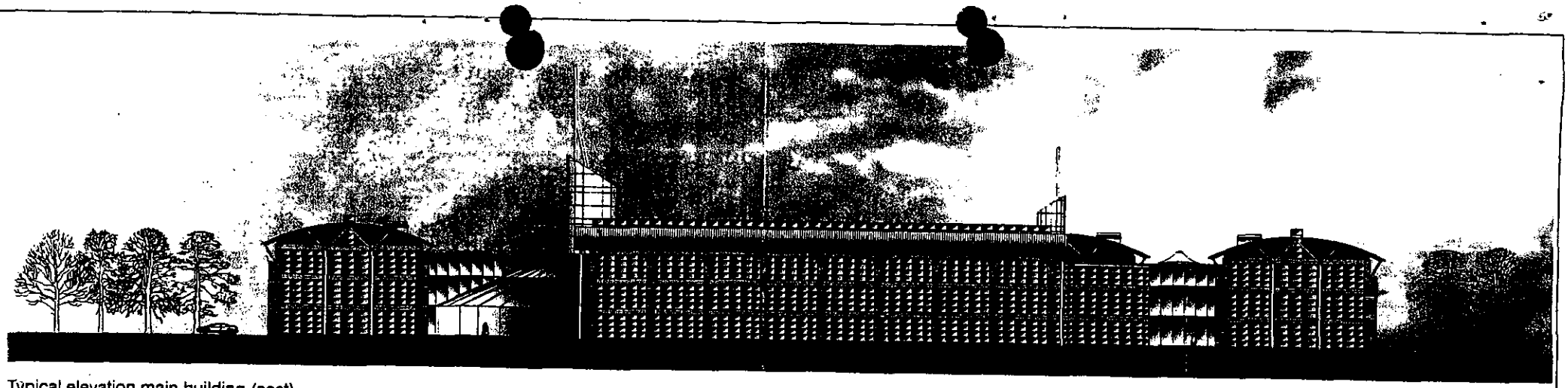
Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

6 September 2000

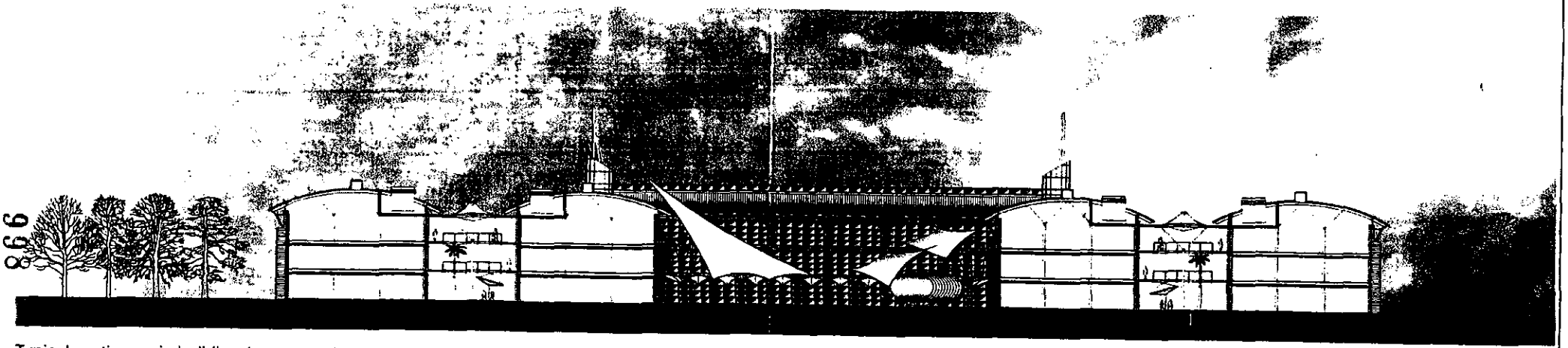
Scale: 1 : 5000

N W E S

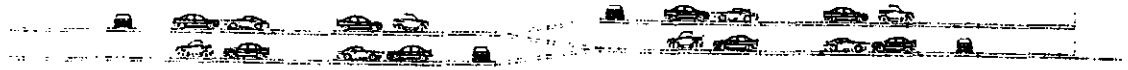

European Weather Centre
European Weather Centre
European Weather Centre
European Weather Centre
The Lodge
CAR PARK (DEPOT)
RELOCATED BUS STOP
RELOCATED BUS STOP
PEDESTRIAN CYCLE ACCESS
997



Typical elevation main building (east)



Typical section main building (west - east)



Typical section car park (west - east)

Project
Met. Office relocation
Shinfield Park, Reading

Drawing Title
Typical Section & Elevation
Option S4B

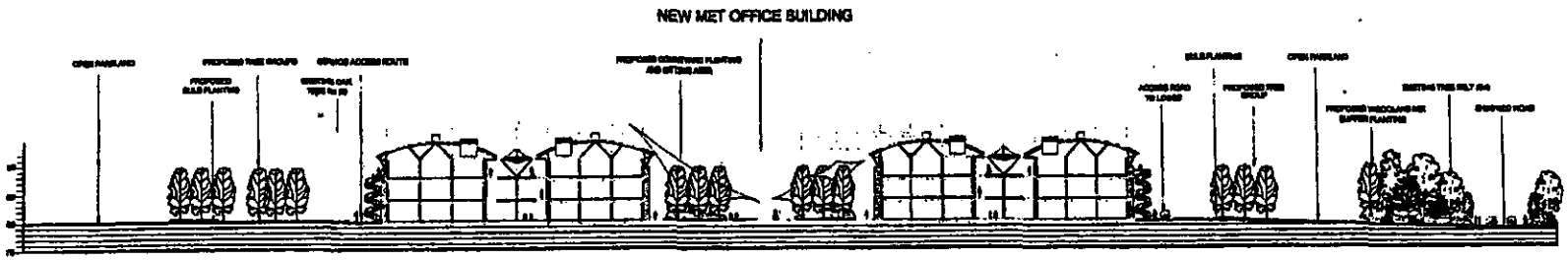
Date	Scale	Drawn by
08-05-00	1:250 (A1) 1:500 (A3)	NPB
Project No	Drawing No	Revision
9906	SK008	-

Barton Willmore
Architecture

Architects Master Planners Town Planners
Environmental Consultants Project Services

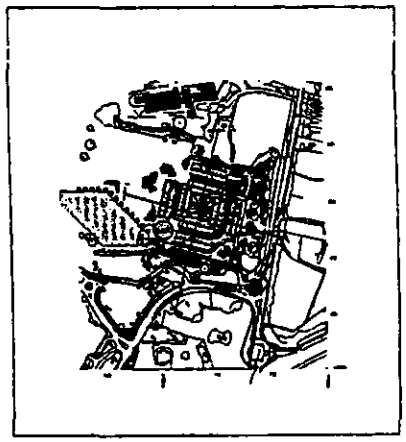
The Barton Willmore Partnership Reading Limited
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close
Calcot, Reading, RG31 7BW
Tel: 0118 943 0000 Fax: 0118 943 0001
e-mail: architects@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

9906



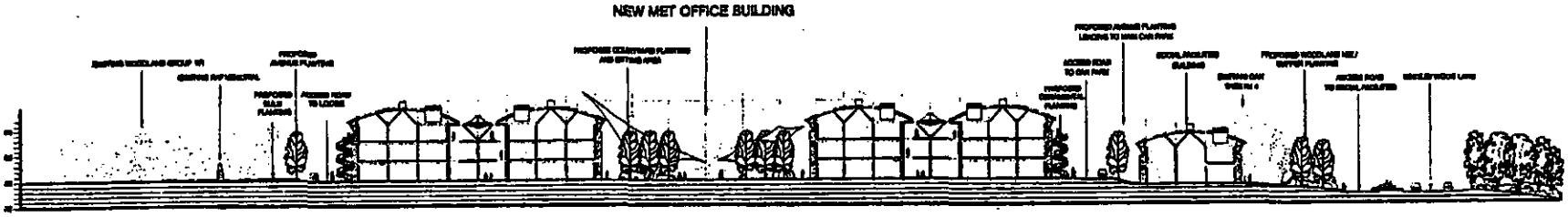
SECTION 1-1

SCALE 1:500



SECTION LOCATION PLAN

SCALE 1:5000



SECTION 2-2

SCALE 1:500

SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane, Reading. RG2 9DF
Telephone number 0118 987 3057
Box Office 0118 926 7135

PLANNING SERVICES | HPT
POL | TLS 31454
DC AMO | ENF
APP |
CS |
06 JUL 2000
COPIES TO: | ACK:
FILE:

PATRON — ANTON RODGERS

Affiliated to N.O.D.A. *Registered Charity No. 265742*

Tel/No (0118) 941 0305

9 Ashmere Close,
Calcot,
Reading.
RG31 7EN

4TH July 2000

RL

Dear Angela,

With reference to our telephone conversation of today, I am writing to express my concern regarding the relocation of the Meteorological Office at Brackniell to the Shinfield Park site to combine with the European Medium Range Weather Forecasting Centre and the Meteorological College. The management of the Shinfield Players Theatre are currently in dialogue with the Relocation Team for this project and plans for the new site have been examined which reveal that where the Theatre is situated, there is the possibility that this area will be used for the erection of a new Sports and Social Club and Crèche and would require the removal of the Theatre.

This initially caused us great concern, with indications that the Theatre would have to close down permanently with the catastrophic loss of this facility to the community. When one considers that the Theatre boasts a membership of 217, 80 of which are Youth Group members whose ages range from 8 to 18 years, teaching them discipline and confidence, plus the fact that this facility presents a new production every five weeks, bringing live theatre, not only to Shinfield, but the surrounding area as well, would be a tremendous blow.

The Shinfield Theatre members own the actual building itself and lease the small piece of land from the Ministry of Defence on a 5-year, renewable lease. Part of the lease agreement is that the Ministry can give us 6 months notice to quit with minimum compensation and it would be beyond our means to raise sufficient monies to buy a piece of land and erect another Theatre. This prompted the Theatre Management and its members to consider mounting a serious campaign to "Save Shinfield Theatre". Fortunately the Met' Office have not followed this line and as stated are in productive dialogue with us, and recent indications are that they have no intention of closing this facility permanently. I am given to understand that there are possibly three offers on the table: -

1. The possibility that the plans may be adjusted to allow us to stay where we are. A suggestion for an alternative site has been submitted to the Relocation Team by us.

2. That the building be dismantled and re-erected on a new site within the complex. Initial reaction to this is that the building would not stand this type of relocation, also it would mean closing down the Theatre for a period with the subsequent loss of an audience and which is very difficult to recapture.

3. That the Meteorological Office would build us a new Theatre with the Shinfield Management and it's members having total autonomy.

As far as the Shinfield Players are concerned this is obviously good news and it is hoped that one of the above suggestions will come to fruition. If this fails then it is the intention of the Theatre management and its members to mount a serious campaign to object most strongly to the closure of this most important facility.

I enclose with this letter a "History of the Shinfield Players and the Shinfield Theatre" which was produced to celebrate the new millennium and hope that you find it of interest. It relates the founding of the Shinfield Players and what has been achieved to the present date.

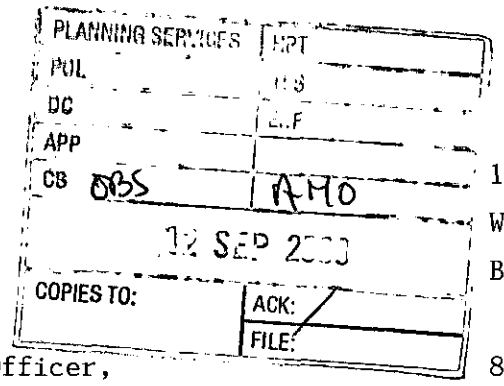
Finally, since the purchase of this building and its erection on its current site in 1970, members, both past and present have raised enormous amounts of money to ensure that the building was of a good standard, safe and comfortable for its audiences and, since its opening, it is estimated that a figure approaching £250,000 has been spent on this project. Over the last two years alone a total of £42,000 has been spent on rewiring the Theatre completely bringing it up to the latest E.C. Standards. A new roof covering has been put in place ensuring the building remains watertight and the Car Park has been resurfaced for the comfort and safety of our patrons. This Theatre is a true Community Theatre and all persons of whatever race or creed are welcome to use this facility. It would be a complete tragedy if this Theatre were forced to close down.

Yours sincerely

Henry

Henry Hawes – Chairman Shinfield Players Theatre.

Angela Odell,
Environmental Services Department,
Planning Services,
P.O.Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berks.
RG40 1WR



17,Copse Drive,
Wokingham,
Berks. RG41 1NA

8 September,2000

The Chief Planning Officer,
Environmental Services Dept.,
Wokingham District Council,
Council Offices,
Shute End,
Wokingham.

Dear Sir,

APPLICATION NO.O/2000/1714 - PROPOSED ERECTION OF BUILDING FOR METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE AT SHINFIELD PARK,SHINFIELD ROAD,READING.

Wokingham District CPRE has given further consideration to the above application and has grave concerns about the likely traffic problems that will arise.Unless firm guarantees are given that this development will be accompanied by major road construction to deal with the likely traffic flows, then we consider that every effort should be made to persuade the MoD NOT to develop this site.

Yours faithfully,

Dr.S.P.Wilford(Chairman,Wokingham District CPRE)

...NEWS RELEASE...

Date: September 12, 2000 Issue No: 376d/00
Issued by: Jill Hemmings (0118) 974 6024

THE FORECAST IS BRIGHT AS MET OFFICE INVESTIGATES MOVE TO WOKINGHAM DISTRICT

The long-term forecast is looking bright for the Wokingham district, after plans by the government's national weather forecasting service for a brand new national headquarters in the area ~~were approved~~ by the district council's development control committee last week (September 6).

The Meteorological Office's plans are for a 37,000 square metre development at Shinfield Park, on the site of the current staff college. The development would include offices, social and sports facilities, a creche and an information centre, plus a ~~multi-storey~~ decked car park.

About 1,500 staff would be based at the headquarters, bringing together employees who currently work in ~~two~~ several different locations in Bracknell, at Beaufort Park in Easthampstead and at Shinfield Park. The Met Office's current accommodation is outdated and in need of repair, with the number of locations where staff are based currently making communication difficult.

The Shinfield Park site, near to the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting and Reading University, would enable the creation of a centre of excellence for weather forecasting and environmental science in the Wokingham district.

Cllr Keith Malvern, chairman of the development control sub-committee, said: "The relocation of the Meteorological Office to the Wokingham district is an exciting prospect, bringing benefits for the local economy, and by working with the developers, we would hope to bring benefits too for residents, such as improved public transport links and wildlife facilities. We will be continuing to encourage the MOD to favour the Shinfield Park site over other options."

- MORE -

Public Relations and Marketing Unit, Wokingham District Council, Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1WQ
Tel: (0118) 974 6000 Fax: (0118) 978 5053

Cllr Muriel Long, Conservative spokesman on development control issues, said: "There are some very strong and clear arguments for basing the new headquarters here in our district. We hope to be working with the Meteorological Office in the near future to finalise the plans and look forward to construction of this new development in the next few years."

The council's development control committee gave their go-ahead to the plans, subject to:

- the Met Office putting in place measures to protect a grade II listed building on the site (The Lodge)
- minimising the impact of development traffic and
- making improvements to public transport (including links to local stations and pedestrian and cycleway access).

Wokingham District Council has also requested a woodland, landscape and wildlife management plan for part of the site which is a Wildlife Heritage Site, and has requested that other trees and woodland should be retained as part of the development.

The plans are part of the Met Office's nationwide search for a location for new headquarters. If the Shinfield Park site is chosen by the Meteorological Office as the ~~venue~~ location for their new headquarters, the siting, design and appearance of the buildings will be finalised in the next three years and the development built within the next five.

The Meteorological Office is part of the Ministry of Defence and provides a national weather forecasting service, as well as being a world leader in meteorology and climatology.

-ENDS –

Note to Editors:
For more information contact Angela Odell of the council's planning and transportation team on (0118) 974 6445.

Tel. 0118 974 6445 (Direct Line)
E-mail: Angela.Odell@wokingham.gov.uk
Date. 8 September, 2000
My ref. AO/O/2000/1714
Your ref. 9906/A3/WD/SLH

Barton Willmore
Beansheaf Farmhouse
Bourne Close
Calcot
READING
RG31 7BW

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 977 8909
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Mr Dawes

OUTLINE APPLICATION NO. O/2000/1714 FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF HEADQUARTERS AND ANCILLARY BUILDINGS (TOTAL FLOORSPACE 37,160 SQ M APPROX.) WITH ASSOCIATED DECKED CAR PARKING FOR USE BY METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE AT SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

I enclose a copy of the agenda report for the Council's Development Control Committee of 6 September 2000, and advise you that the Committee agreed the suggested action in paragraphs 5.03-5.07 of the report. Members also resolved that the following additional resolutions should be added to paragraph 5.03:

1. Any provision of transport (shuttle bus service) to and from railway stations should be *public* transport.
2. Any road improvements agreed under the proposed legal agreement should be completed before the proposed development is occupied.
3. The proposed woodland, landscape and wildlife management plan for the Wildlife Heritage Site should incorporate wildlife corridors linking with adjacent sites.

In addition members stressed the need for a satisfactory solution for accommodation for the Shinfield Players.

The Committee was informed of the following corrections to the agenda report::

1. Letter from the Shinfield Players was circulated (this should have been included attached to the report).
2. Correction to the end of paragraph 5.56 –delete 'Secretary of State' and insert 'Met. Office'.

I trust the above is clear, but if you require further clarification, please contact either the case officer Angela Odell or me.

Yours sincerely

John Mitchell
Development Control Manager

c.c. Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Reading Borough Council

Tel. 0118 974 6445 (Direct Line)
E-mail: Angela.Odell@wokingham.gov.uk
Date. 11 September, 2000
My ref. AO/O/2000/1714
Your ref. 9906/A3/WD/SLH

Barton Willmore Planning Partnership
Beansheaf Farmhouse
Bourne Close
READING
RG31 7BW

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 977 8909
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Mr Dawes

APPLICATION O/2000/1714 – MET. OFFICE AT SHINFIELD PARK

I refer to my letter to you of 8 September and enclose copies of other letters and observations received in relation to the above proposal.

Yours sincerely

Ao

MRS A ODELL
Senior Planner

1714 0/2000/1714

John & Angi

While you were both on leave a Graham Cooper from the Met Office rang on 24th August regarding the attached holding objection from Reading BC. He wanted to know whether this was anything to worry about and if he needed to do anything or whether this was a usual sort of thing. He thought it seemed like a long timescale and yet the application is going to 6th September Committee.

I passed Mike Thorp a copy of this letter and he was ringing Mr Cooper back. His tel. no. is (01344) 855047. done.

Sandra
24.8.00

Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL

PL/	VICES / PT
POL	TLS
CS	33440
24 AUG 2000	
COPIES TO: Ao	ACK: / FILE:

Tony Lear
Director of Environment

Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 7TD
☎ 0118 939 0900
DX 40124 Reading (Castle Street)
Fax: 0118 958 9770
Minicom ☎ 0118 939 0700

Our Ref: 00/00738/WOKADJ/AD

Mr J Mitchell (Development Control Manager)
Wokingham District Council
Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham RG40 1WR

Direct: ☎ 0118 9390023

22 August 2000

Your contact is: **Andrew Dawe – Senior Planning Officer**

Dear Mr Mitchell

RE: Meteorological Office training college, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Reading. Proposal: Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as Meteorological Office (your ref. Angela Odell/O/2000/1714).

I refer to your letter dated 20th June 2000 consulting Reading Borough Council on the above planning application.

The proposal was considered by our Planning Applications Committee on 16th August 2000. The decision was taken to raises a holding objection to the proposal until the following issues have been adequately addressed: the applicant needs to demonstrate that a comprehensive assessment of suitable alternative sites closer to urban centres has been undertaken in accordance with the sequential approach; that appropriate measures, works and contributions have been agreed and secured by a tripartite legal agreement (WDC, RBC & Met. Office) to help achieve a balanced approach to transport matters in accordance with Policies LD5 and BU1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan and the Reading Urban Area Package; and a Green Travel Plan has been submitted to and has been agreed by Wokingham District Council in consultation with Reading Borough Council in accordance with Draft Revision PPG13 (appropriate measures, incentives, targets and reviews to be secured through a tripartite legal agreement with WDC, RBC & Met. Office). If these issues are not adequately addressed the Council believes that the proposal would be contrary to policies LD1 (Sustainable Development), BU1 (Assessment of Proposals for Further Business, Industrial, Distribution and Storage Development), T1 (Integrated Approach to Transport), T2 (Provision for Pedestrians), T3 (Provision for Cyclists), T6 (Control of On-Street and Off-Street Parking) of the Berkshire Structure Plan.

In the event that the Meteorological Office choose to relocate to Beaufort Park near Bracknell or elsewhere (including relocation of the Meteorological Office training college from Shinfield Park),

the Council would strongly urge Wokingham District Council to allocate the existing Shinfield Road site for housing at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with the objectives of PPG3 and the adopted Structure Plan.

In the event that the proposal is agreed by WDC and in the event that WDC and the applicants agree to enter into the legal agreement set out above, then it was agreed that officers of Reading Borough Council should enter into the legal agreement set out above to secure the appropriate transport measures, works and contributions and to secure a Green Travel Plan.

I have enclosed a copy of the report to the Planning Applications Committee for your information.

Yours sincerely

David Breeze
Planning Manager - Implementation

COMMITTEE REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 11

WARD: Wokingham District Council

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 16 August 2000

00/00738/WOKADJ/AD Meteorological Office training college, Shinfield Road

Notice of proposed development under Circular 18/84 for the erection of a headquarters building for the Meteorological Office (consultation from Wokingham District Council).

1. INTRODUCTION

The site is located at the southern end of Shinfield Road immediately to the south of the European Weather Centre at the junction with Whitley Wood Lane and north-east of Shinfield Park (formerly Shire Hall). The Meteorological Office training college currently occupy the site which comprises several mainly single storey buildings and a listed building and a large area of open space to the west of the buildings. Access to the site is currently from Whitley Wood Lane.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

None available.

3. PROPOSAL

Erection of a purpose built headquarters building for the Meteorological Office incorporating the existing training college together with a student accommodation block, social facilities building and associated decked parking. The development would comprise approximately 37,160 sqm of accommodation including the grade II listed building. This would therefore involve relocation from the Bracknell offices. The Meteorological Office are considering either this site or a site at Beaufort Park near Bracknell as locations for this relocation.

4.CONSULTATIONS

This is a consultation from Wokingham District Council who have carried out all the necessary consultations of surrounding residents.

The Joint Strategic Planning Committee have made the following draft comments from a strategic point of view:

- The location within an urban area and on a largely brownfield site with the potential for good access by non-car modes means that the proposal accords with Structure Plan Policies OS1 and LD1. However, there is no evidence that a sequential test has been carried out as required by PPG6. Only sites already owned by the applicant appear to have been examined as options for the proposed relocation (this site and Beaufort Park, Bracknell). PPG6 requires a much wider assessment to be undertaken. In this case a search for sites within the urban areas of Bracknell (including Amen Corner), Reading, Wokingham, Camberley and possibly Maidenhead would seem appropriate.

- As a development to meet the needs of an existing "firm" in Berkshire it accords with the criteria in the first part of Structure Plan Policy BU1. On the assumption that the scheme is a straight relocation and involves no increase in staff across the Met Office's sites in Berkshire, then the second part of the policy, which seeks to ensure that extra housing and transport pressures are not

created, would also be satisfied. Although there would be some transport pressures in the short term, with staff having longer journeys to work, this is likely to settle down over time.

- A number of points in the Transport Assessment (TA) require further analysis or justification. Strategic matters are as follows. Given the large scale and potential impact of the development, the principles of a Green Travel Plan should be firmly established before any decision is taken to proceed with the development. Provision for pedestrians and cyclists will need to be made in the design of the junctions, and a cycle route along Shinfield Road should be secured in advance of the development to satisfy Structure Plan Policies T2 and T3. It will be essential for any transport proposals to be fully integrated with the Reading Urban Area Package and other developments in the local area. For instance, it may be advantageous to coordinate transport proposals such as shuttle buses with those for Foster Wheeler and the current application for development at the former Shire Hall.

5. TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS

A travel survey of existing staff travel highlights that the majority of the staff live in clusters in Wokingham & Bracknell and an average of 53% currently travel to/from work by car. It is unlikely that the majority of the existing staff would change their residence as a result of any relocation. However, certain assumptions have been made in the submissions that in the longer term, any new housing development coming forward south of the M4 motorway would be well located in offering the choice of travel by a range of modes to Shinfield Park. Such statements now seem somewhat premature given the recent Wokingham Local Plan Inquiry decision.

In any event, the traffic impact on Junction 11 itself and the approach roads leading thereto is likely to be quite low. This in view of the fact that most of the car-borne traffic would be travelling from Bracknell and Wokingham. However, some congestion does occur on the roads in the immediate vicinity of the site (mainly within Wokingham). Any improvements to the transport network (considered necessary as a result of the development) including the Shinfield Road corridor (in Reading) must accord with schemes coming forward through the Reading Urban Area Package (RUAP). There may be scope for contributions to be secured towards the RUAP.

A Green Travel Plan (GTP) framework is included in the Transport Assessment and this would provide a good basis for the GTP. However, as the end user and existing travel patterns are known a GTP should have been produced at this stage. Since journeys to and from work for this site would impact on the transport network in Reading, this Council should be a party to the measures, incentives and targets to be included in a GTP. On-site car parking provision represents 50% provision for staff which is very similar to the existing demand and equates to a standard of 1:50. There may be scope to further reduce car parking provision through targets set in the GTP. Essentially a range of options for car-share and alternative travel modes should be in place from day one of any relocation.

A holding objection should be raised through the Wokingham District Council on transport grounds until such times as:

- Appropriate measures, works and contributions have been agreed and secured by a tripartite legal agreement (WDC, RBC & Met. Office) to help achieve a balanced approach to transport matters in accordance with Policies LD5 and BU1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan.
- A Green Travel Plan has been submitted to and has been agreed by Wokingham District Council in consultation with Reading Borough Council in accordance with Draft PPG13. Appropriate measures, incentives, targets and reviews to be secured through a tripartite legal agreement (WDC, RBC & Met. Office). Essentially the GTP shall comply with the good practice guide issued by the Government's Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme in March 2000.

6. ACCESS IMPLICATIONS

The proposal is only being considered in outline form at this stage and so there are no specific design details. However, conditions should be recommended concerning wheelchair access.

7. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The proposal would be redeveloping an existing site within the urban area and therefore would make better use of previously developed land. However, the significant intensification in the use of the site raises concerns about achieving a choice of transport provision and availability of sufficient housing in the longer term in the Reading area.

8. APPRAISAL

In terms of the issues specifically affecting Reading Borough, I consider them to be two fold. Firstly there are the implications for transport provision and secondly there is the impact that such a large development, employing 1502 staff (1419 and 58 relocated from Bracknell and Farnborough respectively and 25 remaining on this college site), might have in terms of housing supply and demand in Reading. The relevant policies of the Berkshire Structure Plan (BSP) are therefore as follows: LD1 (Sustainable Development), BU1 (Assessment of Proposals for Further Business, Industrial, Distribution and Storage Development), T1 (Integrated Approach to Transport), T2 (Provision for Pedestrians), T3 (Provision for Cyclists), T6 (Control of On-Street and Off-Street Parking).

Whilst the proposal represents a relocation of staff from an existing office in Bracknell, there are nevertheless issues raised about the sustainability of staff travelling to the new location which appears to be less accessible by public transport than the existing Bracknell site. In the longer term, the proposal raises the issue of the likely additional pressure such a large development would put on housing supply in the Reading area. Furthermore, whilst the proposal would be expanding/extending the existing use of the site, it is not just a small addition, but represents a major intensification bringing in approximately 1477 additional employees to the area. The existing buildings on the site occupy approximately 7,400 sqm of floorspace compared to the proposed floor area of 37,160 sqm.

From a transport point of view there are concerns as highlighted under 'Transport Implications' above which need to be addressed. Primarily, there would need to be an agreement of appropriate measures, works and contributions to help achieve a balanced approach to transport matters and a Green Travel Plan needs to be agreed. It is not an ideal location from the point of view of accessibility by alternative modes of transport and the applicant should demonstrate that a sequential approach has been carried out to determine whether there are more suitable sites available in or close to urban centres.

In terms of housing supply, the applicant's supporting statement points to Policy BU1 of the Structure Plan. The statement acknowledges the demand for housing in Reading and the resultant presumption against additional unallocated additional employment development where this is likely to significantly impact on housing demand. The applicant's argument in this respect is mainly based around a presumption that there will be a large new housing development south of the M4. However, proposals for such a development have recently been rejected by the Wokingham Local Plan Inspector. Whilst in the short term employees are likely to commute from the Bracknell area, in the longer term it is likely that some employees, particularly new staff, will want to live in or near to Reading. Whilst the Joint Strategic Planning Unit consider that in Berkshire as a whole there would not be any net increase in demand for housing arising from this development, on a local scale there will, in my opinion be implications for housing demand and supply although any impact is likely to be spread out over a longer period of time than would be the case for a new employer coming into the Berkshire area. Notwithstanding this local pressure, it is crucial that the redevelopment of the existing Meteorological Office site in Bracknell should involve a significant element of housing to

address the housing shortage in the wider area and to accord with Planning Policy Guidance note 3 (PPG3).

The proposed decked car parking would encroach onto the grassed area to the west of the existing developed part of the site. The car park would also be close to an area of ancient woodland but would not affect this. The open space is not visible from the surrounding residential area or roads and as such the proposed car park will not affect local amenities.

9. RECOMMENDATION

That Wokingham District Council (WDC) be informed that the Committee raises a holding objection to the proposal until the following issues have been adequately addressed: the applicant needs to demonstrate that a comprehensive assessment of suitable alternative sites closer to urban centres has been undertaken in accordance with the sequential approach; that appropriate measures, works and contributions have been agreed and secured by a tripartite legal agreement (WDC, RBC & Met. Office) to help achieve a balanced approach to transport matters in accordance with Policies LD5 and BU1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan and the Reading Urban Area Package; and a Green Travel Plan has been submitted to and has been agreed by Wokingham District Council in consultation with Reading Borough Council in accordance with Draft Revision PPG13 (appropriate measures, incentives, targets and reviews to be secured through a tripartite legal agreement with WDC, RBC & Met. Office). If these issues are not adequately addressed the Council believes that the proposal would be contrary to policies LD1 (Sustainable Development), BU1 (Assessment of Proposals for Further Business, Industrial, Distribution and Storage Development), T1 (Integrated Approach to Transport), T2 (Provision for Pedestrians), T3 (Provision for Cyclists), T6 (Control of On-Street and Off-Street Parking) of the Berkshire Structure Plan.

In the event that the Meteorological Office choose to relocate to Beaufort Park near Bracknell or elsewhere (including relocation of the Meteorological Office training college from Shinfield Park), the Council would strongly urge Wokingham District Council to allocate the existing Shinfield Road site for housing at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with the objectives of PPG3 and the adopted Structure Plan.

In the event that the proposal is agreed by WDC and in the event that WDC and the applicants agree to enter into the legal agreement set out above, then DELEGATE to officers to enter into the legal agreement set out above to secure the appropriate transport measures, works and contributions and to secure a Green Travel Plan.

Andrew Dawe

COMMISSIONED BY
Barton Willmore Environmental
Beansheaf Farmhouse
Bourne Close
Calcot
Reading
RG31 7BW

1714 0

on behalf of

The Meteorological Office

ADDITIONAL PLAN

SHINFIELD PARK, READING

ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

June 2000

Bioscan Report No.
E0930R0

BIOSCAN (UK) Ltd
Peterley House
Peterley Road
Cowley
Oxford OX4 2TZ

Tel : (01865) 777343
Fax : (01865) 777189
e-mail biosca@globalnet.co.uk

CONTENTS

1. SUMMARY 1

2. INTRODUCTION AND METHODS 2

3. DEFINITION OF ECOLOGICAL VALUE 3

4. LEGISLATION AND POLICIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION 4

4.1. INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION 4
4.2. NATIONAL DESIGNATIONS AND LEGISLATION 5
4.3. LOCAL OR NON-STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS 6

5. RESULTS 10

5.1. DESK STUDY 10
5.2. HABITATS AND FEATURES 10
5.3. ADDITIONAL SPECIES CONSIDERATIONS 14

6. EVALUATION 15

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 16

8. REFERENCES 19

FIGURE 1: HABITATS ON THE SITE 20
PHOTO 1: VETERAN OAK IN SEMI-IMPROVED GRASSLAND WITH NORES HILL WOODS IN BACKGROUND 21
PHOTO 2: OPEN PATH ON THE EDGE OF ANCIENT WOODLAND 21

APPENDIX 1: PLANT SPECIES RECORDED FROM THE SITE. 22

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report describes the results of an ecological appraisal of land at Shinfield Park, Reading, carried out by Bioscan on behalf of the Meteorological Office.

1.2 The appraisal comprised a desk study of available material and a field survey to an extended Phase 1 habitat survey level. The findings are then evaluated and used to assess any impacts or potential ecological opportunities associated with the Met. Office's proposals for redevelopment within the site.

1.3 Aside from buildings and existing development, there are areas of former and current ornamental woodland and species-poor semi-improved and amenity grassland. These areas have little intrinsic ecological value, but the potential of one building for bat roosts is noted.

1.4 The remainder of the site consists of woodland, mainly ancient, on the slopes of Nores Hill, an adjacent area of species-rich semi-improved grassland, and veteran trees scattered in parkland between the existing buildings and the Nores Hill slope. The woodland is a Wildlife Heritage Site. The veteran trees and species-rich grassland are judged to be of equivalent value.

1.5 Potential impacts of the proposed redevelopment are minimal. The submitted proposals avoid all damage to ancient woodland, species rich grassland and the great majority of veteran trees. The proposals are mainly restricted to the footprint of existing buildings and associated amenity grassland and planting. Care will be needed to ensure that renovation of the Lodge building avoids harm to any bat roosts it might contain. A small change in the car park access is recommended to avoid damage to a veteran oak tree. Future management of veteran trees will need to take full account of their high ecological value.

1.6 Conversely there are major opportunities for ecological benefits through appropriate management of species-rich grassland, semi-natural woodland and veteran trees. Outline recommendations are made for the management needed, which are recommended to be developed in association with local nature conservation consultees.

2. INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

2.1 Bioscan (UK) Ltd were commissioned by Barton Willmore Environmental on behalf of the Met Office in May 2000 to undertake an ecological appraisal of land at Shinfield Park, Reading, in connection with proposals for relocation of the Met Office Headquarters. The site is at present occupied by the Met. Office College.

2.2 The site lies on the southern edge of Reading, immediately west of Shinfield Road. On the east of Shinfield Road the adjacent land is the residential development of Lower Earley and there is also extensive residential development to the west of the site. To the north lie school grounds. To the south lie the Foster Wheeler site, but this contains an extension of woodland in the western portion of the site before this is curtailed by the M4 motorway.

2.3 The ecological studies reported on here comprised a desk study of in-house information and that obtained from nature conservation consultees, combined with an independent field survey carried out in early May 2000. The field survey comprised a habitat survey of the site to the level of English Nature's Phase 1 Habitat Survey[1], combined with an assessment of the likelihood or otherwise of protected or otherwise notable species using the site.

2.4 This report describes and evaluates the ecological baseline revealed by these studies and notes the location and extent of any habitats that might be sensitive to impacts should redevelopment take place. Opportunities for ecological enhancement are also noted as appropriate.

3. DEFINITION OF ECOLOGICAL VALUE

3.1 The site has been evaluated to identify the nature and extent of ecological interest of particular species and habitats there, using the standard practice laid out in this section. The nature of ecological interest is defined by reference to the criteria set out by Ratcliffe[2] in 1977 and further extended by the then Nature Conservancy Council (now English Nature and its regional equivalents) in 1989 for use as part of the process of selection of Biological SSSIs[3].

3.2 Primary criteria used for evaluation of a site are size, diversity, naturalness, rarity, fragility and typicalness. Recorded history, position in an ecological or geographical unit, potential value and intrinsic appeal are regarded as secondary criteria and only noted below if they make a special contribution to the interest of a particular area.

3.3 Scales of comparison vary from the international to the context of the local area (in this case the predominantly built-up area of Reading). Occasionally, attention is drawn to the scarcity or abundance of features within the survey area and its immediate surroundings. It must be noted that some criteria are absolute and not relative to scale, e.g. an ancient woodland is fragile, irrespective of whether it is being considered in a local or international context.

4. LEGISLATION AND POLICIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

4.1. International legislation

4.1.1 The Directive of the Council of the European Community on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats and Species Directive 92/43/EEC) lists habitats and species that are considered to require special conservation measures to ensure their continued survival. The Directive will be implemented by the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Those species and habitats requiring protection within SACs are listed in Annex 1 and Annex 2, with the exception of birds, which have been addressed separately in the Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Directive 79/409/EEC). That Directive is implemented in the UK by the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

4.1.2 In Britain, no Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) have been formally designated, although a candidate list has reached the "eligible" stage. Article 10 of this Directive also draws attention to nature conservation in the wider countryside outside protected areas, and the British response to the Directive is put forward in Planning Policy Guidance[4] and Regulations[5]. SPAs have been designated in the UK and further areas are at the "potential" stage and / or under review.

4.1.3 The Berne Convention on the Conservation of Wildlife and Natural Habitats came into force in June 1982. This requires contracting parties, including the UK, to maintain populations of wild flora and fauna and give particular protection to endangered and vulnerable species. In the UK this convention is implemented through various national policies for the protection of wildlife as discussed below.

4.1.4 Britain's responsibilities under the Biodiversity Convention, arising from the Rio de Janeiro summit in 1992, have been translated, in part, into national legislation through the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and through Planning Policy Guidance and Regulations. In addition, the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994) identifies Key and Broad Habitats and species for which Britain has particular responsibilities. The local

Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) are Berkshire's Biodiversity Challenge, produced in 1996 and the Biodiversity Action Plan for Wokingham District, produced in 1998.

4.2. National designations and legislation

4.2.1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)

a) In the UK areas of nature conservation value considered to be of national importance can be designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Biological SSSIs are designated if they are of special interest by reason of their flora and/or fauna. In England SSSIs are designated by English Nature, the Government body with authority for nature conservation. European nature conservation sites are also designated SSSI.

b) The Wildlife and Countryside Act contains a number of Schedules on which are listed species in need of special protection in Britain, usually because they are rare or of restricted distribution, or their numbers have declined drastically in the recent past through persecution and/or habitat loss. Schedules 1-4 cover birds, Schedules 5 and 6 cover other animals, both vertebrate and invertebrate and Schedule 8 covers plants. Birds and other animals in the Schedules, depending on the specifications of the Schedule on which they appear, are variously protected against intentional killing, injuring or taking and their homes may also have legal protection. It is an offence to dig up, take or sell any part of any plant on Schedule 8.

c) The Schedules of the Wildlife and Countryside Act have undergone a quinquennial review in 1997. The review has resulted in added protection for some species, such as bluebells and water vole habitat.

d) Recent developments in European law mean that European protected species (Habitats and Species Directive) are now being treated differently from others although their UK legal protection is at present the same. For the purposes of development, this is likely to mean more stringent tests to ensure that such species are not harmed and that their

conservation status is maintained. Among such species, bats, great crested newts and dormice are among the more frequent encountered on potential development sites.

4.2.2 Protection of Badgers Act 1992

This Act protects badgers and badger setts with provisions equivalent to those of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

4.2.3 The Hedgerows Regulations 1997

These regulations give protection to certain hedgerows more than 30 years old that are judged to be of archaeological, historical, wildlife or landscape importance within prescriptive criteria set out in the Regulations. These criteria include hedges which contain a given number of specified species per sample section, or those which have other features suggesting they are likely to be ancient *i.e.* of ~~late~~ mediaeval origin or before.

4.3. Local or non-statutory designations

4.3.1 Country Parks

Country Parks are designated by Local Authorities often in conjunction with the Countryside Commission. Country Parks are designated to give large numbers of visitors access to the countryside together with other facilities e.g. refreshments and play areas. Typically they are close to large urban centres.

4.3.2 "Second-tier" sites

These sites (here Wildlife Heritage Sites) are typically designated by Local Authorities and/or by County Wildlife Trusts and consist of sites that do not quite fulfil the criteria necessary for designation as SSSIs, but are nevertheless of local or even regional interest (i.e. "substantive" value).

4.2.3 Ancient woodland

Ancient woodland sites are those which have been identified by English Nature as having been woodland since at least the Seventeenth Century and possibly much longer. They are valued for their rich and characteristic flora and fauna. Ancient semi-natural woodlands have declined considerably in the last fifty years.

4.2.4 Species

1 The Red Data Book System (United Kingdom rarity)

a) In the UK, the former Nature Conservancy Council, (now English Nature and its equivalents) and organisations such as the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, have been involved in the production of British Red Data Books. These apply standard criteria to assess the national importance of species, thus allowing the ecological significance of species records to be assessed.

b) The "Red Data Book" (RDB) system is a method of classifying the scarceness and conservation status of animal and plant species developed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). The RDB system classifies listed species as Extinct, Endangered (RDB1), Vulnerable (RDB2) and Rare (RDB3).

c) With regard to native plants, all those recorded in 15 or fewer 10 by 10 km squares from 1930 onwards are included in the Red Data Book. This list, compiled in 1983, has been updated on a more informal basis by the Nature Conservancy Council in 1989 and was extended to include scarce species (those occurring in 16 - 100 10 km squares in Britain) by the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) in 1990.

d) Invertebrates considered to occur in 100 or fewer 10 by 10 km squares of the National Grid are further classified as nationally scarce (Notable), divided into Notable A (16 - 30 squares) and Notable B (31 - 100 squares).

2 Birds of Conservation Concern

A consortium of wildlife groups, led by the RSPB (1996)[6] lists Birds of Conservation Concern which is split into three main sections: red, species of high concern; amber, species of medium concern; and green, all other species which are of lower concern. The criteria for assessing the level of concern includes the rate of decline in breeding populations during the recent past (5-25 year periods), as well as other national and international considerations.

Although the RSPB is a non-statutory consultee, birds on the red list are a significant ecological consideration for the statutory nature conservation consultees. Most Red List species are also UK BAP Priority Species (below).

3 The Biodiversity Action Plan system (UK species in international context)

In response to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro 1992) lists of Priority species have been prepared (as well as Key Habitats) that are considered the most important for the UK's responsibilities towards global biodiversity. These take into account international status as well as the national or local priorities within the UK. For vertebrate animals and plants, the Priority list is relatively fixed, but for other groups is published but remains under review as new knowledge is gained.

On a local level, local Biodiversity Action Plans take into account species and habitats of particular note to the local area covered by each Plan.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Desk study

5.1.1 The only site-based nature conservation designations affecting land on or in the immediate vicinity of the site are those of ancient woodland (as supplied by English Nature) and of Wildlife Heritage Site (as supplied by the Wokingham Biodiversity Officer). Both these designations affect the woodland on the western side of the site, known as Nores Hill. The Wildlife Heritage Site covers the whole of this western woodland on the slope, although it is likely from both map and ground evidence that the ancient woodland occurs in two blocks separated by more recent regrowth.

5.1.2 Species records from the site include bats, regularly monitored in the past by Paula Cox, formerly of Babtie. Recent local authority reorganisation has made these records difficult to trace although the matter is at the time of writing still being pursued. There are old records of dormice from the site, likely to be the Nores Hill woodlands, and recent records from nearby. Results of joint inspection by Bioscan and the Wokingham Biodiversity Officer are reported under the field results below.

5.2. Habitats and features

5.2.1 The distribution of habitats on the site is shown in Figure 1. These are described in turn below. A complete list of flora recorded is given in Appendix 1: fauna of interest or potential value are noted in the text.

Buildings and hard standing

5.2.2 Parts of the site covered by buildings, car parks and other hard development are mainly not of potential ecological interest. The majority of the existing buildings are of a modern construction form that is unlikely to hold bat roosts. An exception is the listed building of the Lodge, which appears from the outside to provide good opportunities for roosts in and around the roof spaces.

Species-poor semi-improved grassland

5.2.3 This description refers to the amenity grasslands around the buildings and to the majority of the grassland on the flat hill top between the buildings and the Nores Hill wood (Photo 1. The sward is dominated by a mixture of grasses, the commonest being Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris* and ryegrass *Lolium perenne*. In most of the area herbs are sparse and limited to common species such as creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and more occasionally sorrel *Rumex acetosa*. However, a small numbers of indicators of unimproved conditions are found scattered in the sward, including mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella*, hardheads *Centaurea nigra* and lesser stitchwort *Stellaria graminea*.

Species-rich semi-improved neutral / acid grassland

5.2.4 The character of the grassland changes passing westward, on a slight break of slope in alignment with a series of veteran parkland trees (below). Here the grassland shows little sign of improvement, except possibly the mainly neutral grassland characteristics in a sward that lacks crested dogstail *Cynosurus cristatus*. With abundant common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*, this may suggest an original slightly acid grassland.

5.2.5 Associated herbs show a mixture of indicator species of unimproved neutral grassland, with eight in all, being stitchwort, marsh *Lotus uliginosus* and common birdsfoot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, hardheads and both heath and field woodrushes *Luzula multiflora* and *L.campestris*, hoary ragwort *Senecio erucifolius*, and mouse ear hawkweed. The southern interface of this area with the Nores Hill woodland has a taller grassland merging into a belt of bramble *Rubus fruticosus* thicket before the woodland is reached, making a diverse habitat edge structure.

Scattered trees

5.2.6 The former parkland retains a number of scattered mature trees. Most are oaks, with some ash. They include a number of veteran specimens of very high ecological quality at sizes up to approximately 2m diameter. The quality is judges on the presence of habitat structural features that appear or increase only as a tree becomes over mature or aged. Trees highlighted on Figure 1 as high quality have a combination of several of the features of abundant dead wood, heart tinder, cavities suitable for hole-nesting birds and bats, sap runs and deeply fissured bark. Several appear to have either been run as pollards in the past or lost their tops and re-grown in the form of pollards. One or two have little living growth (e.g. in Photo 1), but this does not diminish their ecological quality.

Semi-natural broadleaved woodland

5.2.7 Semi-natural woodland is confined to the slopes on Nores Hill. This contains two types: an ash woodland associated with come species avoiding acid conditions and tending to occur on the lower slope and in the north, and an oak woodland with an understorey of more typical acid flora. These are likely to resemble communities W8 (ash – field maple *Acer campestre* – dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*) and W10 (oak – bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* – bramble) in the National Vegetation Classification.

5.2.8 The great majority of the woodland area appears to have had no management for several decades. In consequence it is dominated by high forest and tall shrub layer species with a very heavily shaded ground layer that is in many places dominated by ivy *Hedera helix*. The greatest variety of woodland ground flora species is concentrated along the path that is kept open along the boundary of the site (Photo 2), where all the indicator species recorded were found. Many of these indicator species do however occur more sparsely in the ground layer of the closed woodland, with an apparent concentration within blocks considered to be ancient in the south and north and a gap in the middle coincident with areas suspected to be secondary regeneration.

5.2.9 In all 18 ancient woodland indicators were found, a relatively high total for a wood of this size in Berkshire on a single survey.

5.2.10 Lack of management in many areas has meant that the coppice layer, in particular hazel *Corylus avellana*, tends to be etiolated and / or grown out too far for good dormouse habitat. In the north, stools are also widely separated. However there are exceptions to this that suggest that there is good potential for regeneration of dormouse habitat and that the animals might indeed still survive in small areas. The most notable is in the southern part of the wood, where areas appear to have been felled and planted with beech a few decades ago. Here hazel regeneration has been vigorous, both from old stools and from apparently new establishment. Other small areas scattered through the wood have a good density of older stools.

Broadleaved and mixed plantings

5.2.11 The remainder of the woodland and shrub belts on the site appear to have originated as ornamental plantings. Native tree and shrub species are present, but there are also abundant species not native to the area and / or alien to Britain. The most conspicuous include hybrid limes *Tilia x vulgaris*, the invasive alien cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and yew *Taxus baccata*. Although the last is a native in woodland mainly on chalk, it is unlikely to be indigenous to the site.

5.2.12 The secondary origin of these areas away from the ancient woodland is also consistent with the lack of ancient woodland species in the ground flora. The combination of local dense shade and otherwise nettle and bramble patches does however give seclusion made use of by foxes, which have an earth in the main block of old ornamental plantation in the north-east of the site.

5.2.13 Both muntjac and roe deer are present and make use of both the semi-natural woodlands and ornamental plantations. However their densities do not appear to be sufficient to be a serious threat to regrowth as they are in many woods.

5.3. Additional species considerations

5.3.1 The flora recorded contains no specially protected or rare plants but 18 ancient woodland indicator species and 20 indicators of unimproved neutral grassland (some species are in both categories – Appendix 1).

5.3.2 Although no specially protected bird species are recorded from the site or are likely to occur, the combination of veteran trees, woodland with locally dense shrub layer and grassland makes good habitat for a number of species in decline or otherwise noteworthy. Both green (Amber List and Berkshire 100) and great spotted (Berkshire 100) woodpeckers are present. Among smaller species, blackbird (Amber List) remains common on the site and there is a good variety of common woodland passerines including blue, great and long-tailed tits, goldcrest and blackcap. Sparrowhawk is likely to breed in the Nores Hill woodland.

5.3.3 There are no signs of badgers on the site, possibly because it is isolated and securely fenced. Two mammal runs through the security fence below Nores Hill showed evidence of use by muntjac and fox only. The only terrestrial mammal of note potentially present is the dormouse (European protection and noted as priority at all levels), for which possible habitat survives in fragments in Nores Hill wood and for which there is great potential under appropriate management.

5.3.4 Except for the lack of water bodies the site however produces very good habitat for bat roosting and foraging. For the former, the Lodge and veteran parkland trees have good potential. For the latter, the best habitats are the interfaces between woodland and grassland.

5.3.5 The veteran trees likewise provide good potential for the specialist invertebrate fauna associated with such habitats, including such declining species as the stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* (Wokingham BAP).

6. EVALUATION

6.1. The ancient woodland and Wildlife Heritage site of the Nores Hill woods are confirmed as of value at the WHS, i.e. County scale. This is because of the diversity of flora including ancient woodland indicators, the potential for dormouse habitat, their historical continuity and position in the ecological unit defined below.

6.2. The species-rich semi-improved grassland is not exceptionally diverse and contains no specific rare species. However it retains a small number of indicator species in an appropriate mixture for a semi-natural community. With the adjacent ancient woodland and veteran trees, it makes a significant contribution to the support of declining species such as green and greater spotted woodpeckers and provides the habitat edges that are high quality bat foraging.

6.3. The veteran trees provide the single feature of greatest potential value. Between them they provide all the habitat structure components needed for supporting the specialist fauna and flora (saproxylics) associated with them. Their juxtaposition to relatively species-rich grassland and ancient woodland adds to their value.

6.4. Overall the mosaic of species-rich grassland, veteran trees and ancient woodland forms a complex judges to be of County value.

6.5. The less species-rich grassland has much less intrinsic value, being relatively poor in characteristic species of unimproved grassland. Its only value lies in its potential to extend the existing mosaic of habitats should appropriate management be available.

6.6. The only other feature of potentially substantive value lies in the structural features of the Lodge that provide potential bat roosts.

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 This section outlines potential ecological impacts from the proposed relocation of the Met Office, makes recommendations for minimising any ecological impacts and further recommendations for securing enhancement of features of value.

7.2 The proposed development will have no impact on the ancient woodlands or relatively species-rich grasslands and would have a direct impact on only one veteran tree. It is understood that a small realignment of the proposed car park access could be made to avoid harm to this one veteran oak: this is recommended.

7.3 Potential impacts on features of substantive value are limited to renovation of the Lodge and to any potential indirect impacts on veteran trees through tree surgery or other works recommended for safety.

7.4 Renovation of the Lodge should be designed to retain any bat roosts, as determined by specialist bat survey and where possible to allow for additional roost spaces to be provided, in consultation with English Nature. Licensed work may be required from the DETR in order to maintain or enhance the conservation status of any bats found to be using the building.

7.5 Works on veteran trees will need to avoid harm to bat roosts in the same manner. Works should be kept to the minimum required for health and safety reasons. Wherever possible, stabilisation techniques should be used instead of felling or lopping. No tree should be felled or lopped for aesthetic rather than safety reasons. Even dead veteran trees can retain high ecological value for decades. Where lopping is essential, lopped material should be left to rot naturally in situ.

7.6 As in many parks, there is a lack of new trees to be veterans of the future. However only a few trees are needed to be planted each century to create a sustainable stock. Accordingly, planting of such replacements should await growth from local seed rather

than use imported stock. Imported stock may be used in the parkland area for amenity purposes but only where it does not shade existing veterans or grassland of interest and is understood to be temporary, awaiting eventual replacement by local stock.

7.7 If the above is adhered to, impacts of redevelopment will be minimal, confined to areas of low ecological interest.

7.8 Conversely, there are great opportunities for ecological enhancement, mainly through management of existing and retained woodland and grassland areas. The recommended sequence of action is as follows; timed to ensure that management is in place as redevelopment is completed.

7.8.1 Carry out a dormouse survey of the Nores Hill woods at the optimum time of year i.e. August to early October. The purpose is to determine the location and extent of any surviving pockets used by the animals, so that future management can take this into account.

7.8.2 Institute management regimes for the species-rich grassland and those parts of the retained species-poor grassland that are not needed for formal amenity. On the species-rich area, a cut of half the area each year is recommended, after 14th July, with the arisings removed. In the species-poor area, similar treatment is recommended but with the whole area cut annually for the first three years.

7.8.3 Design a management scheme for the Nores Hill woodland, taking into account landscape needs. Key features to be included will be removal of more recently planted beech and locally conifers to promote the underlying hazel, retention of any existing dormouse habitat without coppicing until new habitat has appeared, reinstating the former ride system that remains visible and establishing the location and number of coppice coupes to promote dormouse habitat in the future. Coppice rotation lengths should be determined by judgement of the actual regrowth rates achieved. There may also be an option to promote regeneration of coppice by planting in some areas if local stock can be obtained.

7.8.4 The above matters, with specific management for veteran trees and any mitigation measures needed for bat roosts in buildings, should be drawn up into an ecological management plan for the site in consultation with appropriate nature conservation bodies such as the District Biodiversity Officer, the Wildlife Trust (now B.B.O.W.T.) and English Nature.

7.9 The overall result will be a high benefit for local biodiversity by securing the appropriate management of a Wildlife Heritage Site and associated habitats.

8. REFERENCES

1 NCC (1990) *Phase 1 Habitat Survey: a technique for environmental audit*. Now published by JNCC as the NCCs successor body for overall conservation.

2. Ratcliffe, DA (1977) *A Nature Conservation Review*. Cambridge University Press.

3. Nature Conservancy Council (1989) *Guidelines for the selection of biological SSSIs.* Peterborough, NCC (now English Nature).

4. *Planning Policy Guidance, Nature Conservation. PPG9.* October 1994. Department of the Environment, London.

5. *The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994.* HMSO, London.

6. RSPB (1996) Birds *of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man*. RSPB, Sandy, Bedfordshire.

Photo 1: Veteran oak in semi-improved grassland with Nores Hill woods in background



Photo 2: Open path on the edge of ancient woodland



APPENDIX 1: PLANT SPECIES RECORDED FROM THE SITE.

WR – species (y) on site only found in the Nores Hill woodlands. MESO IND: English Nature indicators of unimproved mesotrophic (neutral) grassland on a scale from 1(weakest) to 8 (strongest). AWVI(S) Ancient woodland indicator species in the former Nature Conservancy Council's South Region, given as score 2 for those considered to have stronger restrictions to ancient woodland sites. Alien: I=species introduced to Britain and / or not native to the site.

Latin name	English name	WR	MESOIND	AWVI(S)	Alien
Acer campestre	Field maple			1	
Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore				I
Achillea millefolium	Yarrow				
Aegopodium podagraria	Ground elder				I
Agrimonia eupatoria	Agrimony		1		
Agrostis capillaris	Common bent				
Agrostis stolonifera	Creeping bent				
Alliaria petiolata	Jack-by-the-hedge	y			
Anemone nemorosa	Wood anemone	y	2	2	
Anthoxanthum odoratum	Sweet vernal grass				
Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow parsley				
Arctium minus	Lesser burdock				
Arrhenatherum elatius	False oat-grass				
Arum maculatum	Cuckoo pint	y			
Bellis perennis	Daisy				
Betula pendula	Silver birch				
Brachypodium sylvaticum	Wood false-brome		1		
Bromus sterilis	Sterile brome grass				
Calystegia sepium	Hedge bindweed				
Capsella bursa-pastoris	Sherherd's purse				
Cardamine pratensis	Cuckoo flower		1		
Carex echinata	Star sedge	y	2		
Carex hirta	Hairy sedge				
Carex remota	Remote sedge	y		1	
Carex sylvatica	Wood sedge	y		1	
Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam			1	
Centaurea nigra	Hardheads		1		
Cerastium fontanum triviale	Common mouse-ear				
Cerastium glomeratum	Sticky mouse-ear				
Ciccaea lutetiana	Enchanter's nightshade	y			
Cirsium arvense	Creeping thistle				
Cirsium palustre	Marsh thistle				
Cirsium vulgare	Spear thistle				
Cornus sanguinea	Dogwood	y			
Corylus avellana	Hazel	y			
Crataegus monogyna (g)	Hawthorn				
Crepis capillaris	Smooth hawksbeard				

Latin name	English name	WR	MESOIND	AWVI(S)	Alien
Crepis vesicaria	Beaked hawksbeard				
Dactylis glomerata	Cocksfoot				
Dechampsia caespitosa	Tufted hair-grass				
Dryopteris filix-mas	Male fern				
Elymus caninus	Bearded couch	y			
Elytrigia repens	Couch grass				
Epilobium hirsutum	Great hairy willowherb				
Epilobium sp.	Willowherb				
Equisetum arvense	Field horsetail				
Fagus sylvatica (g)	Beech	y			
Festuca gigantea	Giant fescue			1	
Festuca rubra	Red fescue				
Fraxinus excelsior (g)	Ash				
Galium aparine	Goosegrass				
Geranium molle	Dovesfoot cranesbill				
Geranium robertianum	Herb robert				
Geum urbanum	Wood avens				
Glechoma hederacea	Ground ivy				
Hedera helix	Ivy				
Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed				
Hieracium pilosella	Mouse-ear hawkweed		1		
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire fog				
Holcus mollis	Creeping soft-grass	y		1	
Hyacinthoides nonscripta	Bluebell	y	1	1	
Hypericum perforatum	Perforated St John's wort				
Hypochaeris radicata	Cat's ear				
Ilex aquifolium (g)	Holly			1	
Lamiastrum sp.	Garden archangel	y			I
Lapsana communis	Nipplewort				
Ligustrum vulgare	Wild privet	y			
Lolium perenne	Perennial ryegrass				
Lonicera periclymenum (g)	Honeysuckle	y			
Lotus corniculatus	Birdsfoot trefoil		1		
Lotus uliginosus	Marsh birdsfoot trefoil		1		
Luzula campestris	Field woodrush		1		
Luzula multiflora	Heath woodrush		1		
Medicago lupulina	Black medick				
Mercurialis perennis	Dogs mercury	y			
Milium effusum	Wood millet	y		2	
Myosotis arvensis	Field forget-me-not				
Myosotis spp.	Garden forget-me-not	y			I
Phleum pratense	Timothy				
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort plantain				
Poa annua	Annual meadow grass				
Poa nemoralis	Wood meadow grass	y		1	
Poa pratensis	Smooth meadow-grass				
Poa trivialis	Rough meadow grass				

Latin name	English name	WR	MESOIND	AWVI(S)	Alien
Populus tremula	Aspen	y		2	
Potentilla reptans	Creeping cinquefoil				
Primula veris	Cowslip		2		
Primula vulgaris	Primrose	y	2	1	
Prunella vulgaris	Self heal				
Prunus laurocerasus	Cherry laurel				I
Prunus spinosa (g)	Blackthorn				
Prunus spp.	Cultivated cherries				I
Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken				
Quercus cerris	Turkey oak				I
Quercus robur	Pedunculate oak				
Ranunculus repens	Creeping buttercup				
Rhamnus catharticus	Buckthorn	y			
Rosa arvensis	Field rose	y		1	
Rosa canina (g)	Dog rose				
Rubus fruticosus agg.	Bramble				
Rumex acetosa	Sorrel				
Rumex conglomeratus	Clustered dock				
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved dock				
Sagina procumbens	Procumbent pearlwort				
Salix cinerea	Grey sallow				
Sambucus nigra (g)	Elder				
Scrophularia nodosa	Figwort	y			
Scrophularia vernalis	Yellow figwort	y			I
Senecio erucifolius	Hoary ragwort		1		
Senecio jacobaea	Ragwort				
Senecio vulgaris	Groundsel				
Sherardia arvensis	Field madder				
Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet				
Sonchus asper	Prickly sowthistle				
Stachys sylvatica	Hedge woundwort				
Stellaria graminea	Lesser stitchwort		1		
Stellaria holostea	Greater stitchwort				
Stellaria media	Chickweed				
Tamus communis	Black bryony	y		1	
Taraxacum agg.	Dandelion				
Taxus baccata	Yew				I?
Tilia x vulgaris	Hybrid lime				
Trifolium campestre	Hop trefoil				
Trifolium dubium	Lesser yellow trefoil				
Trifolium repens	White clover				
Ulmus procera (g)	Elm				
Urtica dioica	Nettle				
Valeriana dioica	Valerian		4		
Veronica arvensis	Wall speedwell				
Veronica chamaedrys	Germander speedwell				
Veronica montana	Wood speedwell	y		2	

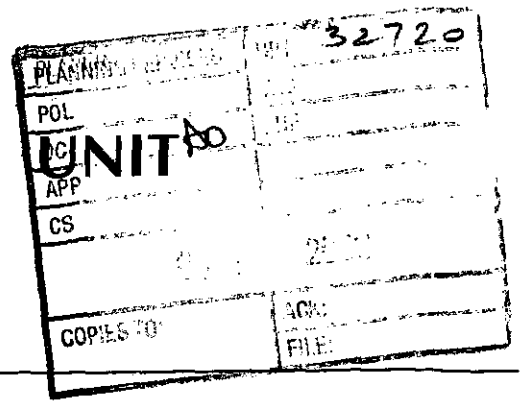
Latin name	English name	WR	MESOIND	AWVI(S)	Alien
Veronica officinalis	Heath speedwell	y	1		
Vicia sepium	Bush vetch			1	
Vicia tetrasperma	Smooth tare	y	1		
Viola riviniana	Dog violet	y	2		
TOTALS	135	31	20	18	8

The Berkshire Unitary Authorities'

JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING UNIT

St. Mary's House, c/o Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead SL6 1RF
Tel. 01628 796749 Fax. 01628 796739

Head of Strategic Planning and Transport: Stuart Hylton



Please ask for: Phil Gill
Direct Line: 01628 796518
Email: phillip.gill@rbwm.gov.uk
Our Ref: M/3/6
Your Ref: O/2000/1714

Angela Odell,
Planning Services,
Wokingham District Council,
PO Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
RG40 1WR.

4 August, 2000

Dear Angela,

Proposed Met Office Relocation to Shinfield Park

Thank you for consulting the Joint Unit on this proposal. I note that it is a consultation under Circular 18/84 and therefore not legally a planning application. For this reason I am not phrasing this letter in the normal form of object/not object; rather I am merely commenting on the issues raised and their relationship to strategic planning policy.

These comments have now been approved by the Chairman and Vice chairmen of the Joint Committee. Please ensure that these comments are passed on to the relevant Secretary of State.

Location

The location within an urban area and on a largely brownfield site with the potential for good access by non-car modes means that the proposal accords with Structure Plan Policies OS1 and LD1. However, I have seen no evidence that a sequential test has been carried out as required by PPG6 (paragraph 1.15). Only sites already owned by the applicant appear to have been examined as options for the proposed relocation (this site and Beaufort Park, Bracknell). PPG6 requires a much wider assessment to be undertaken. In this case a search for sites within the urban areas of Bracknell (including Amen Corner), Reading, Wokingham, Camberley and possibly Maidenhead would seem appropriate.

It is also important to note that permission should not be granted for development on both of the proposed sites. This would give tacit approval to the principle of commercial development on whichever site was not taken forward for the Met Office relocation. Certainly in the case of Beaufort Park this would be inappropriate.

Employment

The new Met Office building in itself would appear to accord with Policy BU1. As a development to meet the needs of an existing "firm" in Berkshire it accords with the criteria in the first part of the policy. On the assumption that the scheme is a straight relocation and involves no increase in staff across the Met Office's sites in Berkshire, then the second part of the policy, which seeks to ensure that extra housing and transport pressures are not created, would also be satisfied. Although there would be some transport pressures in the short term, with staff having longer journeys to work, this is likely to settle down over time.

My concern is with the future use of the site the Met Office plan to vacate in London Road, Bracknell. The above reasoning on BU1 will only be correct if there is no significant employment development on the London Road site once the relocation takes place. I understand that Bracknell Forest Borough Council is currently preparing a development brief for the London Road site, and I am hopeful that this will reflect the employment issues. I appreciate that this is outside of your Council's control, but it is a crucial issue which must be considered by the decision maker in this case, whom I understand to be the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Transport

A number of points in the Transport Assessment (TA) require further analysis or justification. Strategic matters are as follows.

The agents have agreed the principle of providing a Green Travel Plan, and this is welcomed. Given the large scale and potential impact of the development, the principles of such a Plan should be firmly established before any decision is taken to proceed with the development. In particular, staff surveys to establish travel needs and preferences will need to be carried out before the move. The Plan would benefit from incentives for staff to relinquish a parking space and from a commitment to the provision of real time public transport information, and should also contain a commitment to limit the number of car journeys to and from the site. Until the Plan is secured by legal agreement the proposal will conflict with Policy T1.

Provision for pedestrians and cyclists will need to be made in the design of the junctions, and a cycle route along Shinfield Road should be secured in advance of the development to satisfy Policies T2 and T3.

The TA appears to have overestimated the number of staff who would readily switch from car use to more sustainable modes. As a result there is insufficient attention given to parking management (on and off site), contrary to Policy T6. To comply with this policy there would need to be an indication as to what parking restrictions were to be imposed locally.

It will be essential for any transport proposals to be fully integrated with the Reading Urban Area Package and other developments in the local area. For instance, it may be advantageous to coordinate transport proposals such as shuttle buses with those for Foster Wheeler and the current application for development at the former Shire Hall.

I trust the above will be useful to you. I will be responding separately to Bracknell Forest Borough Council on the companion proposal to this one (relocation to Beaufort Park, Bracknell).

Yours sincerely,

P.A. Gill

Phillip Gill
Senior Planner

cc Martin Bourne, BFBC
Andrew Dawe, RBC

Date: 07 July 2000

To: Case Officer

We have received Additional Plans for the following planning application:

Application Number: O/2000/1714

Location: Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.

Proposal: Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

Applicant: Ministry Of Defence C/O Barton Wilmore Planning.

Case Officer: Angela Odell

The new plans show the following: Ecological appraisal.

Comments are required by 28/07/2000.

Should you have any queries regarding this application please contact the case officer Angela Odell on (0118) 974 6445.

(RING ONE)

REVISED PLANS | ADDITIONAL PLANS | MINOR AMENDMENTS | ADDITIONAL / REVISED PLANS TO COMPLY WITH CONDITIONS

App No. (Planaps) /0/2000/1714 (Ludhouse) Date Rec.

Location: Met. Office Training College, Shinfield Park

Parish Shinfield

Applicant: Met. Office

Description of attached plans Ecological Appraisal,

Drawing No's:

CONSULTEES

Copies of plans will automatically be sent to Woodley Library, Part I Reg., Parish Council, Ward Councillors and the Case Officer unless specified.

Please tick which of the following you wish consulted.

OTHERS: Andy Glenwood, Pinton Partners

Drawing No's

1. NK (Landscape & Trees) ✓
2. NK (Env. Design)
3. XA (Highways)
4. NF (Building Control)
5. BC/DC Liaison

A full set of plans will be sent to all consultees unless particular drawing No's are specified in the spaces above.

NEIGHBOURS:

Date for Responses 3 weeks

FURTHER ACTION

Re-advertise App. Y/ N (Delete as required)

Redate Application Y/ N From

New Site Notice Y/ N

New Description

CASE OFFICER AD

Consultations Sent by Admin. on 07.07.05.

Yellow - Part One Copy
Green - Officer's Copy

PLANNING SERVICES | LT 31457
POL
DC AMO
APP
CS
06 JUL 2000
COPIES TO: | ACK:
FILE:

The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership - Reading
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot,
Reading, RG31 7BW.
Tel 0118 943 0000 Fax 0118 943 0002
e-mail: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

Barton Willmore
Planning

ADDITIONAL PLAN
1714 1

Director of Environmental Services,
Wokingham District Council,
PO Box 157,
Council Offices,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berks. RG40 1WR

FAO: MRS. A. O'DELL

9906/A3/WD/SLH

5th July 2000

Dear Sir,

CONSULTATION UNDER CIRCULAR 18/84
PROPOSED MET OFFICE RELOCATION TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD
APPLICATION NO. 0/2000/1714

We refer to the above consultation and enclose four copies of an ecological appraisal of the site prepared by Bioscan Environmental Consultants.

Yours faithfully,

WR Dawes

W.R. DAWES
Senior Planner

Enc.

Certificate No. FS 29937

Town Planners • Environmental Consultants
Architects • Master Planners • Project Services

Contact: Gareth Capner, Ian Tant, Roger Turnbull, Mark Sitch

A list of partners can be inspected here and at our associated offices in:
Bristol Cambridge Edinburgh Leeds London West Malling (Kent)

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 JUNE 2000 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.10 PM

Present: Mrs.D C Beatty, Mr.M J Bryant, Mr S R Conway, Mrs.A N M C Drake, Mr T P Dredge, Mr J L Earnshaw, Mrs J A Lissaman, Mrs M A Long, Mr K A Malvern, Mrs M Robertson and Fiona Rolls.

Also present under Standing Order 39: Mr F D Browne, Mr G Cowan, Simon Etheridge, Mr C E Lawley, Mr A Miller, Mr N D Rose and Mrs E L M Siggery,

40. CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Mr S.R.Conway be elected Chairman for the meeting.

41. ORDER OF BUSINESS

With the agreement of the Committee, the order of business was varied so that those applications where members of the public had indicated a wish to speak could be dealt with first.

42. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 June 2000 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted from Mr.A J Ross.

61. APPLICATION NO.O/2000/1714 – PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD.

The Committee considered a report (Agenda pages 508 to 513) about this application. Members noted that this was one of a number of sites to which the Meteorological Office was considering re-locating and that the application was before Members at the present time in order that they could express some preliminary views about it, prior to formal consideration at a later date.

Members made a number of comments which were noted by the officers and the

WARD: Shinfield

6.00 APPLICATION O/2000/1714 PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

Purpose of Report

6.01 To advise members of receipt of the above application.

Suggested Action

6.02 To ask members to note receipt of the above application and to advise officers of any concerns or requests for further information.

Background Information

6.03 The Meteorological Office is consulting WDC regarding its proposed development under arrangements used by government departments under Circular 18/84. (The Meteorological Office are part of the Ministry of Defence.)

The agents have explained that the Met. Office is a world leader in meteorology and climatology and is the forefront of scientific and technological development. Its existing headquarters buildings in Bracknell are outdated and too costly to be worth modernising, and are inconveniently located in several buildings. The proposal for new building at their Shinfield Park site has been made because they already own it. (It currently accommodates their training operation.) This site is also attractive to them as it would strengthen existing links with the European Centre for Medium Weather Forecasting (on adjacent land) and with Reading University. The Met. Office is also consulting with Bracknell Forest BC under Circular 18/84 with regard to the construction of a similar, alternative headquarters building at their Beaufort Park site. (Beaufort Park is sited north of Nine Mile Ride and east of Old Wokingham Road in Bracknell Forest BC.) Following both consultations, The Met. Office will consider their position with regard to relocation. At present relocation away from the Reading-Bracknell area has not been considered in detail, nor have other non Met. Office owned sites in the locality. The future use of the Met. Office's London Road, Bracknell site will be the subject of a planning brief to be prepared in conjunction with Bracknell Forest BC. It is envisaged that a mixed use redevelopment could take place on the site, including opportunities for new housing.

The Proposal

6.04 The proposal is in outline for a 33,351 m² headquarters office/computer/ ancillary teaching building, car parking, a social building (including creche) and an accommodation block for students. The indictive plans show a 3 storey office block and a decked car park with 750 spaces . About 1,500 staff are expected (nearly all transferred from Bracknell). All existing buildings on the site would be demolished except the Grade II Listed Lodge. The main access would be directly onto the existing roundabout on Shinfield Road. A

Green Transport Plan is proposed, including a possible shuttle bus service to Winnersh Triangle Station to collect staff, many of whom currently live in Bracknell and Wokingham. A contribution is also proposed to highway improvements in the local area, which may include re-modelling the roundabout and the WDC scheme for proposed road improvements to the B3270.

Planning Issues.

6.05 The site is within a settlement boundary and an initial assessment has not identified any obvious physical or visual site objections. The main issues are therefore considered to be the strategic ones of potential pressures on housing and transport. Regarding housing, this is essentially considered to be an issue for central Berkshire as a whole in this case. The agents have pointed out that the proposal is essentially a relocation of existing staff from offices nearby in Bracknell, and that a new settlement for up to 2,500 houses is proposed to be nearby. The extent to which additional housing pressure is a concern will depend partly if not mainly on what happens to the existing vacated sites in Bracknell; in particular the amount of new housing (if any) which could offset this potential pressure, and the amount of office/ employment floorspace which would add to pressure in any mixed use redevelopment. The highway officer will assess the effect of the proposal on highways and transport.

The alternative site at Beaufort Park in Bracknell Forest BC is outside a settlement boundary and in a gap between settlements.

Consultations

6.06 WDC expect to be consulted on the proposal at Beaufort Park, and we have sent consultations to Bracknell Forrest BC, Reading BC and the Joint Strategic Planning Unit (amongst others).

Equal Opportunities Implications

6.07 None

Financial Implications

6.08 Contributions towards highway improvements locally are proposed. Other contributions towards services and infrastructure may be requested.

Consultations with Parish and Town Councils/Voluntary Sector Organisations

6.09 Shinfield Parish Council and Earley Town Council have been consulted and any comments received will be reported.

Environmental Implications

6.10 Will be assessed when the application is reported to the Committee for observations to be sent to the Met. Office.

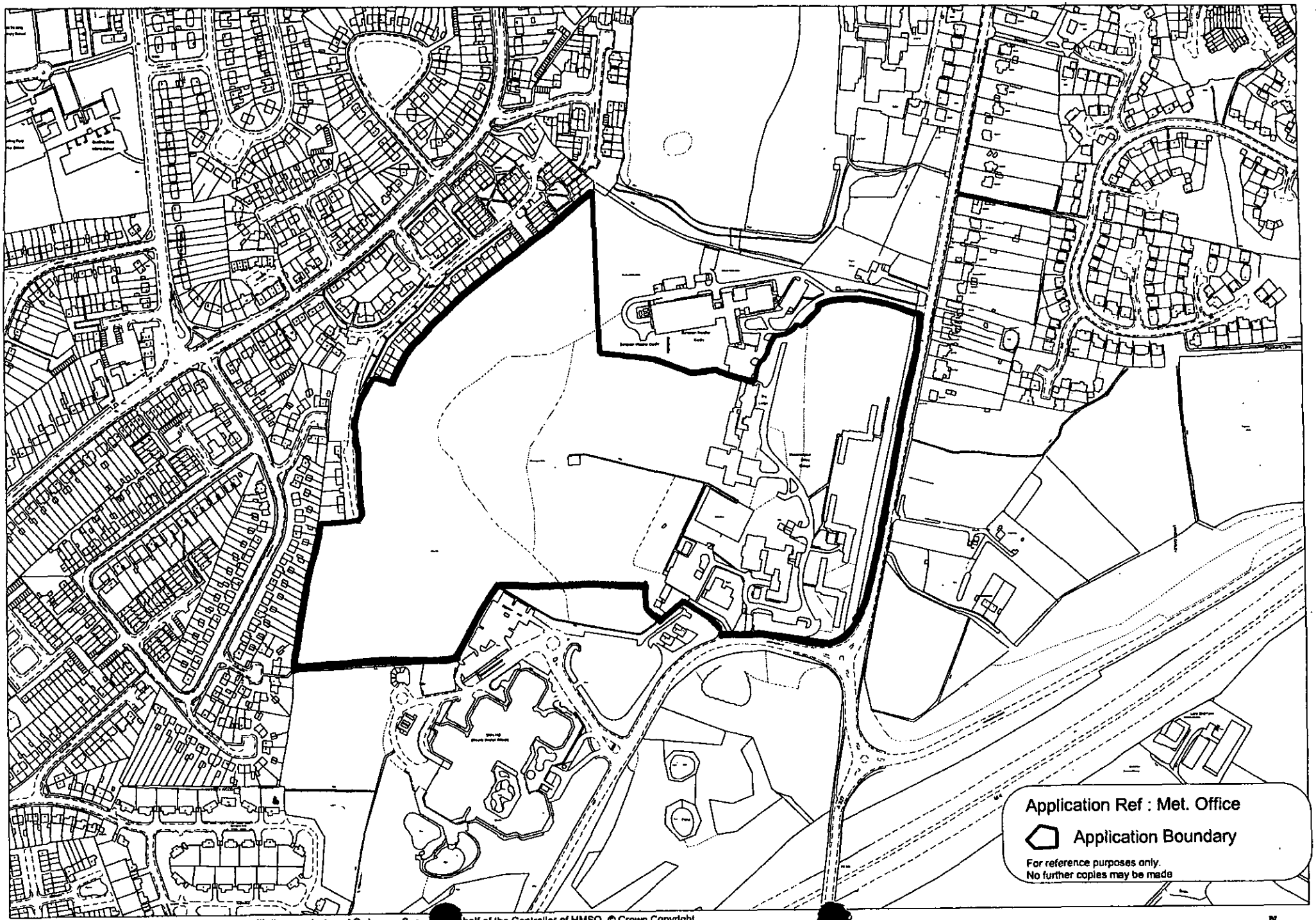
Time Constraints

6.11 As the new accommodation is required by the Met. Office by the end of 2002, observations from WDC are required as soon as possible.

Background Papers	Department Where Held
Planning Application O/2000/1714	Environmental Services

Angela Odell

16.06.00



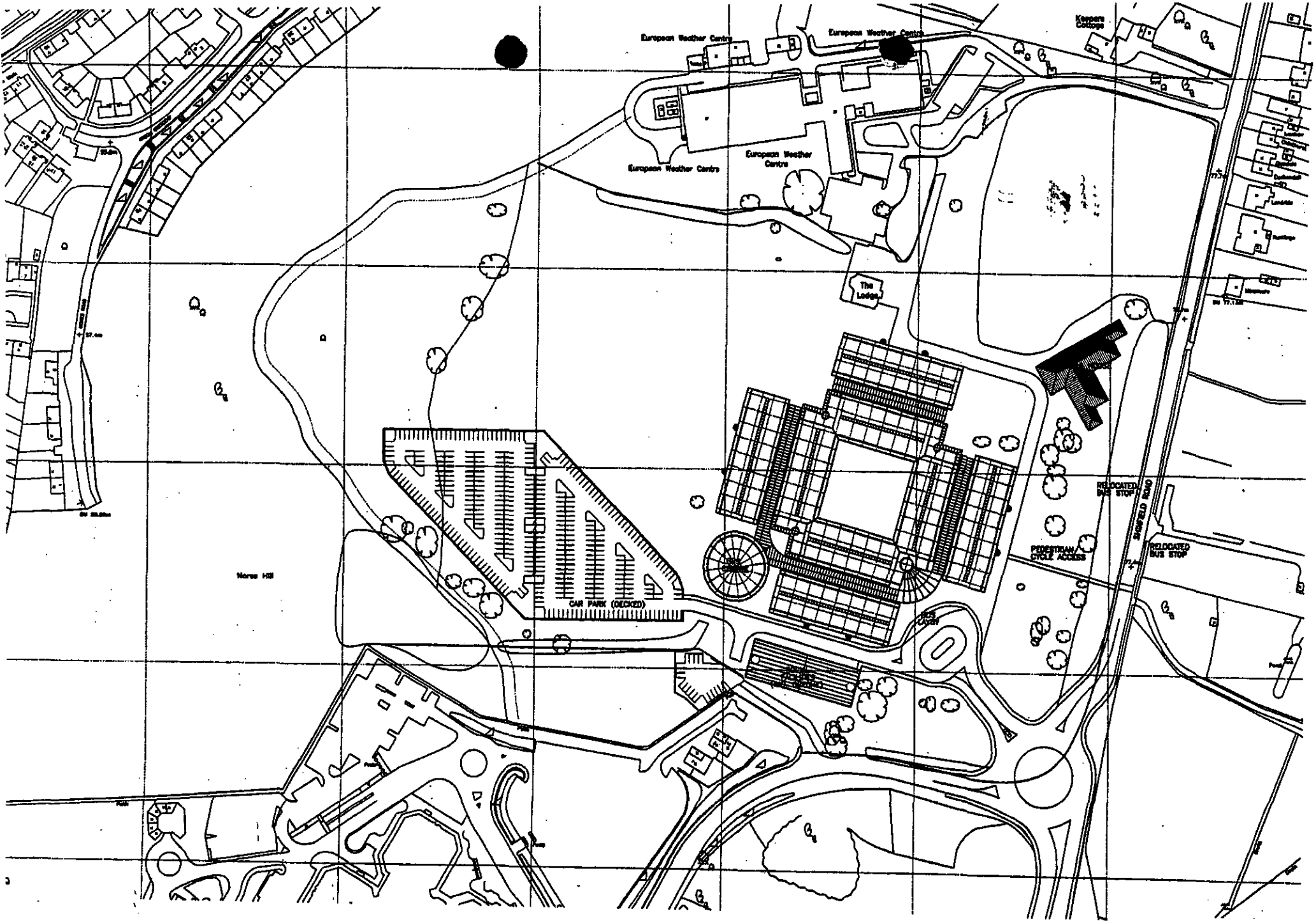
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

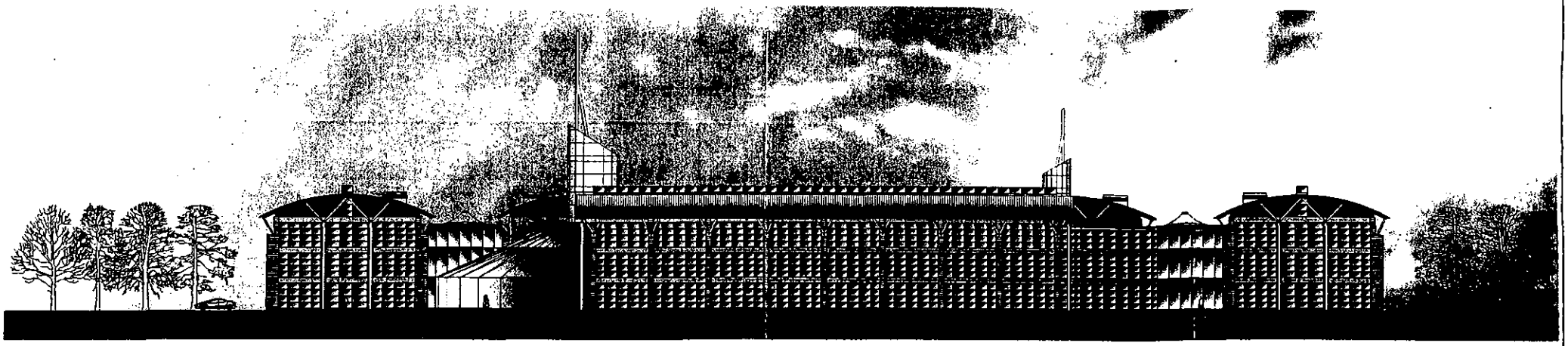
28 June 2000

Scale: 1 : 5000

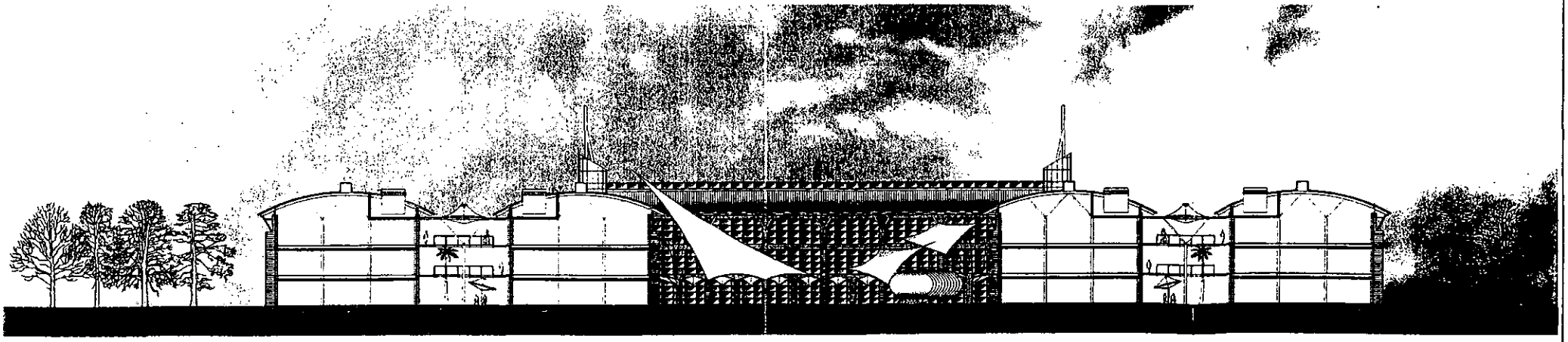
N
W E
S



Indicative Plan



Typical elevation main building (east)



Typical section main building (west - east)



Typical section car park (west - east)

Project
Met. Office relocation
Shinfield Park, Reading

Drawing Title
Typical Section & Elevation
Option S4B

Date	Scale	Drawn by
06-05-00	1:250 (A1) 1:500 (A3)	NPB
Project No	Drawing No	Revision
9906	SK008	-

Barton Willmore
Architecture

Architects Master Planners Town Planners
Environmental Consultants Project Services

The Barton Willmore Partnership Reading Limited
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close
Calcot, Reading, RG31 7BW
Tel: 0118 943 0000 Fax: 0118 943 0001
e-mail: architects@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2000 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.25PM

Present: Mr K.A Malvern, (Chairman) Mrs J.A Lissaman, (Vice-Chairman), Mrs D.C Beatty, Mr M.J Bryant, Mr T.P Dredge, Mr J.L Earnshaw, Mr R.F.N Eke, Mrs M.A Long, Mrs M Robertson and Fiona Rolls.

Also present under Standing Order 39: Mr G. Cowan, Mrs A.N.M.C Drake, Simon Etheridge, Mrs E.L.M Siggery and Mr A.W Spratling.

91. ORDER OF BUSINESS

With the agreement of the Committee, the order of business was varied so that those applications where members of the public had indicated a wish to speak could be dealt with first.

92. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 July 2000 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S.R Conway and Mr B.J.S Patman.

116. APPLICATION NO.O/2000/1717 PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD.

The Committee considered a report on this Application as set out on Agenda pages 970 to 999.

In explaining the report, the Head of Planning and Transportation drew Members attention to a letter of comment from the Shinfield Player Theatre that had been omitted from the Agenda. Attention was also drawn to an error in paragraph 5.56 page 982 of the Agenda which referred to comments in relation to the Shinfield Players being forwarded to the

Secretary of State. This was incorrect and should have read that comments would be forwarded to the Meteorological Office.

Members were reminded that the Council was not the determining authority for this application as it had been made by the Crown and were therefore asked to resolve what observations to make to the Meteorological Office.

The Head of Planning and Transportation also stated that Members had commented on the proposal informally at its meeting of the 28 June 2000, and that a site visit had been made on 20 July 2000.

RESOLVED: That observations be made to the Meteorological Office as per paragraphs 5.03 and 5.04 on pages 970 and 971 of the Agenda with addition of the following observations:

1) That wildlife corridors at the site be preserved.
2) That every effort be made to preserve the tenure of the Shinfield Players.

5.00 OUTLINE APPLICATION NO. O/2000/1714 FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF HEADQUARTERS AND ANCILLARY BUILDINGS (TOTAL FLOORSPACE 37,160 SQ M APPROX.) WITH ASSOCIATED DECKED CAR PARKING FOR USE BY METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE AT SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD APPLICATION BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE UNDER CIRCULAR 18/84

Purpose of the Report

5.01 In the interests of clarity Members are advised that the Council is **not** the determining Authority in this case. The application is made by the Crown, and development by the Crown does not require planning permission. Government policy, expressed in Circular 18/84, is that the Council should handle the proposal as though it were a planning application in terms of publicity etc, and should forward its views, and those of consultees and respondents, to the developing Department, in this case the Meteorological Office, which is part of the Ministry of Defence.

5.02 The purpose of the report is to consider the above application and resolve the observations to be forwarded to the Meteorological Office.

Suggested Action

5.03 The Committee is advised to endorse the recommendation set out below:

To advise the Meteorological Office that Wokingham District Council expresses its support and raises no objection in principle to Application O/2000/1714 for the proposed erection of headquarters and ancillary buildings subject to entering into a legal agreement under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1992 and any other relevant statutory provision, comprising the following:

(i) An appropriate package of measures to mitigate the impact of the development traffic, including improvements to public transport

(ii) Provision and implementation of a woodland, landscape and wildlife management plan for the Wildlife Heritage Site and other trees and woodland to be retained.

The Meteorological Office to carry out further detailed assessments in relation to traffic and transport matters (referred to in (i) above) and to consult Wokingham District Council on details of the above package of measures. The proposed development not to proceed until the package of measures has been agreed and endorsed by the Development Control Committee.

5.04 Also to the following conditions (for which WDC also to be consulted on the contents):

1. a) Approval of the details of the siting, design and external appearance of buildings (including works to the listed building), the means of access thereto and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced.

b) Application for approval of the reserved matters referred to in a) above shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

c) The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission or before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved whichever is the later.

REASON No such details have been submitted and standard time periods.

2. Construction work of any sort shall only take place within the area covered by the application between the hours of 7.00 am and 7.00 pm Monday to Fridays and 7.00 am to 1.30 pm Saturdays and no construction work shall take place on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

REASON To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring residents and the locality.

3. Provision shall be made to accommodate all site operatives' visitors' and construction vehicles loading, off-loading, parking and turning within the site during the construction period in accordance with details to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON In the interests of highway safety and convenience.

4. Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on the adjacent public highways in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

REASON In the interests of highway safety and convenience.

5.05 Informatives

1. The detailed design and siting of the proposed buildings should take into account concerns expressed about potential works to and the setting of the listed building and to the retention of important trees on the site.

2. The developing Department is advised that the Comments of the District Council are based on the proposal for a development of no more than 37,160 sq m floorspace in total.

3. The Developing Department is advised that the District Council would wish to ensure that the fabric and setting of the listed building are not materially harmed by the proposed development

4. Surface water source control measures should be carried out in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences.

5. No soakaways should be constructed such that they penetrate the water table, and they shall not in any event exceed 3 metres in depth below existing ground level.

6. No soakaways should be constructed in contaminated ground.

Additional Observation

5.06 Wokingham District Council supports the concerns expressed by the Shinfield Players about their future accommodation and supports the efforts of the applicants to continue to seek to resolve this issue.

Observation to the applicants and Bracknell Forest Borough Council

5.07 The applicants, in consultation with Bracknell Forest Borough Council, are recommended to propose a substantial reduction in the amount of B1 floorspace and a high number of residential units in the Planning Brief for the proposed future redevelopment of the London Road site.

5.08 Under Circular 18/84 the Council must forward copies of objections and representations received from third parties to the Meteorological Office, for their consideration as to whether the substance of any such representations is such that it would be appropriate for the Secretary of State to decide whether the development should proceed, and may decide to hold a public inquiry.

Site Description

5.09 This 17.6 ha. site is located on an elevated plateau and currently accommodates the Meteorological Office staff college which provides training facilities with ancillary residential accommodation. In the eastern part of the site there are single and two storey buildings of various ages including the main teaching and administrative accommodation in terrapin type buildings, restaurant, new accommodation block (Alexandra House), the Lodge which is a Grade II Listed Building and two former accommodation blocks. There is in the order of 7,400 m^2 floorspace in total on the site. To the west of the existing building is a large area of open grassland which is bounded on the west, north-west and south-west by woodland on sloping ground. The latter is a Wildlife Heritage Site (WHS).

5.10 Access to the site is from Whitley Wood Lane to the south to the main parking area adjacent. A public footpath passes adjacent to much of the southern boundary of the site. There is a former NAFFI building on the south of the site presently leased to the Shinfield Players and used as a theatre. There are also trees in the north-eastern part of the site, along Shinfield Road and between some of the buildings.

5.11 The ECMWF (European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting) is adjacent to the northern boundary of the site, and is separately accessed from the A327 Shinfield Road. There are residential properties to the west of the site at the bottom of the slope next to the woodland, and also opposite part of the eastern boundary of the site on the far side of Shinfield Road.

Proposal

5.12 Is to demolish all the existing buildings on the site, except for the original part of the Grade II Listed Building, the Lodge. The application is in outline with no reserved matters to be determined. The illustrative plans show a 33,351m² three storey main headquarters building approximately 15m high providing office, ancillary teaching and computer operations accommodation. This includes 29,283m² offices of which 4,645m² is for operations room. A 1,115m² social building is also proposed and a replacement residential block (2,266m²). The original part of the Lodge (428m²) would be retained and refurbished as a visitor centre and the modern additions to it demolished. A total of 37,160m² floorspace is proposed, and up to 1,500 staff are expected.

5.13 The main building would be constructed round a quadrangle. The external elevations are proposed glazing between masonry piers. The social facilities building would be a mainly double height single storey building accommodating social and sports facilities, a crèche and information centre. The decked car park would be a maximum 4.5m high set into the slope. It is stressed that the plans are illustrative and the detailed design could be very different.

5.14 Access to the site would be from the south-east via an enlarged roundabout at the junction of Shinfield Road and Whitley Wood Lane, with bus lay-by and loop immediately inside the site. The social building would be separately accessed off Whitley Wood Lane with its own car park, but also with direct access from inside the site. A 750 space two storey decked car park is proposed on the southern part of the open area of the site. Some trees would be lost, but additional planting is proposed. A Landscape Management Plan would be developed for the site (including the ancient woodland) in consultation with the Council.

Need for the Proposal

5.15 The information given in this section has been provided by the applicants' planning consultants. The Meteorological Office is an Executive Agency to the MOD and has operated as a trading fund since April 1996. As the UK's National Meteorological Service it operates at the forefront of scientific and technological development, and occupies a world leading position in meteorology and climatology with an expanding and increasingly global customer base. The Meteorological Office employs about 1,400 staff in the area. Most are currently based in Bracknell at the main London Road site, at other buildings nearby in urban Bracknell, at Beaufort Park (Easthampstead) and at Shinfield Park.

5.16 The Meteorological Office need to relocate to a single new site because the existing London Road offices are outdated, in need of repairs, are inefficient and unsuited to modern working requirements. Having staff spread across several sites is inefficient and makes communication difficult. Redevelopment of the London Road site would be unlikely to provide sufficient accommodation and would require temporary alternative accommodation. This would be highly

disruptive to the Meteorological Office's operation. There is a need to upgrade specialist computer facilities in early 2003 which requires new accommodation by the end of 2002.

5.17 Shinfield Park is put forward because it would strengthen ties with the adjacent ECMWF and links with Reading University, creating a 'centre of excellence' for meteorology and environmental sciences.

5.18 The Meteorological Office is also consulting with Bracknell Forest Borough Council under Circular 18/84 with regard to the construction of a similar, alternative headquarters building at their Beaufort Park site. (Beaufort Park is sited north of Nine Mile Ride and east of Old Wokingham Road in Bracknell Forest Borough Council). It is understood that other sites elsewhere in the country are also being investigated. Following both consultations, the Meteorological Office will consider their position with regard to relocation. At present relocation away from the Reading/Bracknell area has not been considered in detail, nor have other sites in the locality not owned by the Meteorological Office. The future use of the Meteorological Office's London Road, Bracknell site will be the subject of a Planning Brief to be prepared in conjunction with Bracknell Forest Borough Council. It is envisaged that a mixed use redevelopment could take place on the site, including opportunities for new housing.

5.19 Regarding the comments of the JSPU in relation to other possible alternative sites, the consultants have advised that a suitable relocation site for the Met. Office requires a site which can accommodate the amount of office floorspace proposed (together with the ancillary residential and social accommodation) which must also be secure (due to the Met. Office's inclusion within the MoD) and immediately available. To the knowledge of Bracknell Forest B C no other site which meets the above requirements is available in Bracknell. The availability of sites in the context of the 'Planning Commitments for Employment Uses Survey' undertaken in March 1999 for the main Berkshire towns of Reading, Bracknell, Wokingham and Maidenhead was also examined, but found to contain no alternative site which would readily meet all of the Met. Office's identified criteria.

'The Bid Process'

5.20 As the Meteorological Office is a government property and the proposal is above a threshold level, they have to seek a private partner with a view to design/build/ manage the project on the site, on an alternative site or existing alternative suitable premises. This has been done but the selection of a partner is unlikely to be finally confirmed until April 2001. Until a partner has been selected, the proposal is only illustrative and is likely to alter depending on the partner. The amount of floorspace proposed is the maximum required and a subsequent detailed application could propose less.

5.21 The following documents accompany the application: Planning Statement, Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Transport Assessment.

5.22 **Consultations**

- *Shinfield Parish Council :* Recognise the importance of the Meteorological Office but raise concerns (letter attached).

- *Earley Town Council :* Recognise the importance of the Meteorological Office but raise concerns (letter attached).

- *Joint Strategic Planning Unit :* Letter attached.

- *Reading Borough Council :* Object (letter attached).

- *Bracknell Forest Borough Council :* Letter attached.

- *CPRE :* Concerned highway provisions are inadequate.

- *Letter of objection (41 Woodside Way) :* Due to scale, proposal is not 'low level' development in line with the Structure Plan and the area is already suffering from a superheated economy, building is unsympathetic, will exacerbate traffic congestion, car park too large, tree loss, loss of Shinfield Players, a social club would cause noise and disturbance outside normal hours, there are suitable alternative sites at Green Park.

- *Letter of objection (37 Woodside Way) :* Concern workers would park on residential roads.

- *Highway Officer :* It is acknowledged by both the Highway Authority and the Applicant that the highway network in the vicinity of this site is inadequate in its current layout to accommodate the likely level of additional traffic that will be generated by this development. However, the applicant proposes major highway infrastructure improvements along with a Green Travel Plan to mitigate the development traffic to a level whereby nil detriment will be caused, with additional benefits to peak hour congestion. Although a number of issues are yet to be resolved, the Highway Authority can confirm at this stage that the principle of development can be accepted subject to further detailed assessment and consideration of the necessary infrastructure improvements to both the highway network and public transport to make the development acceptable. It is intended that once these outstanding issues are finalised they will be reported back to the next available Committee for consideration.

- *English Heritage :* Would wish to comment on the proposed demolition of the southern wing of The Lodge and on details of repair works to the exposed walls of the remaining building. Comments that the footprint appears extremely large for the site and for the 18th century Lodge it will abut.

- *Conservation Officer :* Would wish to comment on the proposed works to the listed building and on the details of the proposed design and siting of the proposed buildings in relation to the setting of the listed building.

- *Environment Agency :* No objection subject to conditions.
- *Ecologist :* Broadly endorses the ecological appraisal. Recommends an agreement covering a Woodland and Wildlife Management Plan.
- *Police Architectural Liaison Officer :* No objection in principle.
- *Consultant Archaeologist :* Does not require any archaeological investigation.
- *Tree Officer :* Recommends that the detailed layout is designed to minimise the loss of any important trees.
- *Ramblers Association :* Would like to see a more attractive boundary to the footpath than the current high mesh fence and razor wire, and public access to the woodland.

Appraisal

5.23 Main issues are:

A. Principle of Proposal - Land Use Allocation : (BSP Policy LD1; Loddon Area Local Plan: Policies LTV1, LS2; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policies WOS3, WBE20).

B. Principle of Proposal - Employment Policies : (Berkshire Structure Plan: Policy BU1; Loddon Area Local Plan: Policy LE2; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policy WEM4; RPG9, SERPLAN).

C. Traffic, Transport and Highway Issues (Berkshire Structure Plan: Policies T1-T6; Loddon Area Local Plan: Policies LT5, LT6, LT8, LT9 and LT11; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policies WT1, WT2, WT3, WT6 and WT7; PPG13).

D. Physical and Visual Impact (including effect on the Listed Building, trees and wildlife): (Berkshire Structure Plan: Policies EN1, EN4, EN8; Loddon Area Local Plan: Policies LBE1, LBE2, LBE17, LC9; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policies WBE1, WHE10, WHE11, WNC4).

E. Shinfield Players (Berkshire Structure Plan: Policy R6; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policy WIC1).

F. Services and Infrastructure Contributions : (Berkshire Structure Plan: Policy LD6; Loddon Area Local Plan: Policy LPS1; Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft): Policy WOS4).

G. Concerns of the Parish Council and Local Residents.

A. **Principle of Proposal - Land Use Allocation**

5.24 The site is within the settlement boundary in the Loddon Area Local Plan and Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft). The site is also covered by 'low density' Policies LS2 and WBE20. However, it was agreed by the Environmental Services Committee of 22.03.99 as part of the pre-Local Plan inquiry changes to delete Policy WBE20 in order to "take account of the strategy to make the best use of land already developed". In view of this, and that the proposal is to site buildings so as to retain the majority of the parkland and woodland setting, it is considered that there is no objection in principle in land use allocation terms to the proposal.

B. **Principle of Proposal - Employment Policies**

5.25 The key policy is Berkshire Structure Plan Policy BU1. The Berkshire Structure Plan does not propose any major new employment allocations but gives flexibility for development beyond the existing commitments. Policy BU1 states that permission will normally be granted for business development where it meets at least one of the four criteria. It is considered that the proposal satisfies criterion (iii) as it would meet the needs of an existing firm in Berkshire.

5.26 Policy BU1 then states that this is

"provided that it does not give rise (either by itself or cumulatively with other such schemes) to:

- *pressures for housing development additional to the provision in this Plan; or*
- *transport problems, having regard to the capacity of the transport network, the rate at which the transport strategy is being implemented and accessibility by public transport."*

These two issues are addressed in paragraphs 5.32-5.44 below.

5.27 Policy BU1 also states that account should be taken of the amount of suitable land and premises available and the rate of completions and occupations of premises.

5.28 Loddon Area Local Plan Policy LE2 has been overtaken by Berkshire Structure Plan Policy BU1 and Wokingham District Local Plan (Deposit Draft) Policy WEM4. Policy WEM4 is the local plan equivalent of Policy BU1, and requires compliance with it. It also requires there is no net loss of floorspace catering for certain types of use or need. The proposal complies with this latter point.

<u>Policy background to potential additional pressures on housing and transport infrastructure</u>

5.29 Berkshire Structure Plan Policy BU1 requires a careful approach towards employment generating development additional to current commitments. This stemmed from RPG9 (March 1994) (Regional Planning Guidance Note) which

stated that a reducing rate of development was appropriate in the western sector of the South-East to enable infrastructure and services to catch up.

5.30 Regional Planning Guidance Note 9 (RPG9) is currently under review, with SERPLAN seeking to impose similar policies on the western sector to discourage inessential development which is seen as fuelling unsustainable development pressures. However, this approach was rejected at the EIP (Examination in Public) with the suggestion that problems relating to traffic congestion and labour shortages be tackled positively by:

"the improvement of local public transport, the elimination of congestion hot-spots and by new house building (including the provision of affordable homes) within sustainable travelling distance. As a matter of general policy, neither congestion nor labour supply should be used as a reason for frustrating the proper elevation of the regional economy to world class."

(Report of the Panel into the draft Regional Planning Guidance for the South East, September 1999, paragraph 4.32).

5.31 The public consultation Draft RPG for the South East (March 2000) endorses this approach. However, this is not yet adopted policy, nor is there a new Berkshire Structure Plan or Draft Berkshire Structure Plan based on this approach.

Potential pressure on housing

5.32 At least initially, Meteorological Office staff would be expected to travel to Shinfield Park from their existing homes, which are mainly located in and around Bracknell. (The Meteorological Office would not pay any relocation expenses as the distance between their existing premises and Shinfield Park is below the threshold for such payments). The proposal itself is therefore not expected to give rise to any significant immediate pressure on housing. Over time staff could be expected to increasingly live nearer to Shinfield Park, but at a rate of change in which they would be gradually absorbed into the more locally based housing stock.

5.33 The more pertinent issue is what would happen to the vacated premises in Bracknell. The Meteorological Office's existing London Road premises are freehold and comprise about 21,000m² floorspace on 1.78 ha. The Meteorological Office and their consultants are currently discussing a Planning Brief for redevelopment of this site for mixed uses including offices and residential units. The remaining 6 buildings in urban Bracknell are leased and comprise about 9,000m² floorspace. The Meteorological Office would not be able to control their future use.

5.34 Therefore, to avoid significant additional pressure on the Central Berkshire housing supply, it is considered important that redevelopment of the London Road site comprises a high proportion of residential units and a low proportion of offices. It is therefore considered that Wokingham District Council's observations on the current application should include a recommendation to this effect.

5.35 Regarding the comments of the JSPU in relation to other possible alternative sites, the consultants have advised that they have not been able to identify any

alternative sites that would meet all the Met. Office's requirements, and the Council is not aware of any such sites either.

C. **Transport**

Roads

5.36 The site is located at the intersection of two Distributor roads, the A327 which forms part of the Primary Distributor Road network and is defined as a 'road of more than local importance' within the Berkshire Structure Plan, and the B3270 Earley Outer peripheral Road (EOPR). It is accepted by both the applicant and the Highway Authority that during peak periods the existing mini roundabout junctions connecting the A327 with the EOPR are operating over capacity and results in extensive queuing and delays, particularly during the morning peak period. These queues can extend a considerable length with northbound queues on the A327 regularly extending south beyond the roundabout junction with Hyde End Road. Access to the development is proposed by the introduction of a fourth arm to the northern most roundabout and considerably increasing its size.

5.37 The Transport Assessment (TA) submitted in support of the proposal identifies that the net increase of additional vehicle trips on the network as a result of the development will be 570 (two way) during the morning period and 394 (two way) during the evening peak. In terms of the distribution of this traffic, the TA assumes that during the morning peak 75% of this traffic will be travelling from the east along the EOPR, 7.9% from the south along the A327, 14% travelling from the north along the A327 and 3% from Whitley Wood Lane. Whilst the majority of the additional traffic will impact on the EOPR, this will clearly have an adverse affect on some of the existing links to the two roundabouts, in particular the northbound queue along the A327.

5.38 In order to mitigate this additional traffic, the applicant proposes 2 options for major junction improvements. Option 1 involves simply enlarging both roundabouts, whereas Option 2 proposes enlarging both roundabouts and providing a link road which in effect extends the EOPR to link up with Whitley Wood Lane. The modelling exercise carried out, shows that option 2 will offer most benefit overall. It is however important that the Authority does not commit at this stage to any scheme until all options have been considered fully, but accept in principle improvements can be carried out as part of the development that would mitigate the impact of the development traffic.

Car Parking

5.39 The proportion of on site car parking proposed does not appear to differ significantly from the existing demand as it represents approximately 50% provision for staff. In the context of guidance within the draft PPG13, new development should not be designed to accommodate existing parking demand but seek to reduce the availability of parking so as to encourage means of travel other than by private car. It is considered that on site parking should be used more as a demand management tool whereby car parking provision should be gradually reduced in line with targets and aims of a Green Travel Plan (GTP).

Pedestrian/cycleway access

5.40 Pedestrian/cycleway access is to form an integral part of this development. Although the applicant proposes a Toucan crossing on the A327 to the west of the site, there are still a number of outstanding issues relating to improving pedestrian/cycle access, in particular, the possibility of upgrading the existing footpaths links running through the site for shared use for cycleways. This would provide good links to the residential areas

to the north west of the site. The applicant has identified proposals for new/improved cycleways as contained within Local Transport Plan and Reading Urban Area Package, but has offered no financial contributions to bring these schemes forward. Discussions are continuing with the applicant on this issue, however good accessibility by foot and bike are considered to be a fundamental part of this proposal.

Public Transport

5.41 Improved public transport in the form of a shuttle bus linking the site to the local stations is also proposed. Whilst this is welcomed, there is concern as to whether the anticipated modal shift/patronage is realistic. There is also a concern that improvements to public transport should not be exclusively for Met Office employees and that improved public transport facilities should be integrated within the existing services that are currently available. Discussions are still continuing with the applicant on these issues.

5.42 Green Travel Plan

The GTP proposed by the Met Office is also welcomed although targets and more measures of restraint, including possible staged reduction in car parking as the GTP develops should be included. These issues can be agreed at a later stage.

5.43 The internal arrangement of the site is not an issue at this stage, as the detailed scheme may alter significantly to that shown on the drawings. In any event, there is sufficient land within the site to ensure adequate access roads/turning facilities for all vehicles including and public transport/delivery/service vehicles.

Conclusion on transport issues

5.44 It is recommended that no objection be raised in relation to traffic and transportation matters but that the development should not proceed until such time as the further detailed assessments have been carried out and an appropriate package of measures to mitigate the impact of the development traffic, including improvements to public transport have been agreed and endorsed by the Development Control Committee.

D. **Physical and Visual Impact**

5.45 As already explained in the section 'proposal', the proposed development is in outline with no reserved matters to be determined. In view of the 'bid process' which the Meteorological Office has to go through, the proposed details are very much indicative, and the main purpose of the current application is to establish the principle of development of the proposed amount on the site.

General Impact of Proposal

5.46 The site is inside the settlement boundary but the southern and south-eastern boundaries are adjacent to the settlement boundary. The character of the plateau area on the west side of Shinfield Road up to the Reading boundary is essentially one of the larger buildings in parkland settings (Crosfields School, the ECMWF and ex-Berkshire County Council buildings). Therefore, although the proposed building would be a large one, a building of this scale would generally be in keeping with the character of the area and the size of the site. Apart from the decked car park, the indicative layout plan shows that most of the built form would be sited on the area of existing built development on the eastern part of the site.

Views from outside the site

5.47 The indicative proposals show the main part of the proposed headquarters building would be 15m high. The section drawings show that the existing tree belts would largely screen this building and the proposed car park and relocated Alexandra House from views from Shinfield Road, from the lower ground to the west of the site in the vicinity of Woodside Way, from the longer distance view from junction 11 of the M4, and from most of the public footpath on the south boundary of the site.

5.48 The building would be seen from the proposed access, though could be partially screened in the longer term by planting on the internal roundabout. The proposed social building would also be partially seen from Whitley Wood Lane through its own access point. However, the existing Barclay House and Shinfield Players buildings can already be seen from Whitley Wood Lane and proposed additional planting would help screen these views.

Listed Building

5.49 Potential concerns have been expressed by English Heritage and the Council's Listed Buildings' Officer about proposed works to the Listed Building and the effect on the proposed headquarters building on its setting. These concerns would be expected to be taken into account in the design and siting of the proposed buildings in the subsequent detailed application.

Trees and wildlife

5.50 A tree survey and assessment have been submitted. The indicative plans show retention of the main areas of woodland and retention of most of the higher category trees. Any concerns that the Tree Officer expresses about the proposed loss of any individual trees can be expected to be taken into account in the subsequent detailed application. The proposed woodland and wildlife management plan would be expected to provide satisfactory management of the woodland areas and trees on the site and for the protection of wildlife and habitats.

Conclusion on physical and visual impact

5.51 The proposals are indicative but it is considered that they illustrate that in principle a main headquarters building of the size proposed and ancillary accommodation could be acceptably accommodated on the site. The subsequent detailed design and siting proposals would need to ensure that proposed works to, and the setting of, the listed building are acceptable and do not result in the removal of important trees which should be retained.

E. **Shinfield Players** (letter attached)

5.52 The Shinfield Players are currently accommodated in an ex-NAFFI terrapin building on a 6 month lease. The lease has been renewed every 6 months for some years. The Meteorological Office have advised that they consulted the Shinfield Players about the proposal two months before it was submitted to Wokingham District Council and offered them joint-use space in the proposed social building.

5.53 The Shinfield Players, however, consider this unsatisfactory as they wish to own/control their own building so that they can put on performances every night in a run, and set up the stage and retain it through the run. The Shinfield Players are pressing for one of the 3 options listed in their letter to be provided (remain in situ, re-erect the building elsewhere on the site, or the Meteorological Office to provide a new theatre).

5.54 The Meteorological Office and their consultants, however, have explained that the existing site of the Shinfield Players' building is the most suitable site for the proposed social building as it can be separately accessed and used without causing significant security problems regarding the main building and part of the site. They also consider the proposed social building would be more visually in keeping with the redeveloped site.

5.55 The Meteorological Office have also explained that ultimately the Shinfield Players have no right to stay on the site and if the Meteorological Office do not relocate here, then the site is expected to be disposed of, and it would be up to the new owner/operator as to their future. However, the Meteorological Office have said they recognise they have a social responsibility to the Shinfield Players, hope that the matter can be resolved, and that this could mean offering them assistance to relocated off-site. However, it would not mean entirely financing a new replacement building, as the Meteorological Office is publicly accountable for its expenditure and consider that they would be unlikely to be able to justify such expenditure.

5.56 Policy WIC1 states that permission will not be granted for proposals that involve the loss of community facilities unless the authority is satisfied that there is no need for the particular facility or alternative provision is available nearby. Whilst the future of the Shinfield Players has not yet been resolved, this issue should be considered in the overall context and circumstances of the proposal. It is considered that the Council should express its support in principle for the Shinfield Players and to support a resolution of the issue that is acceptable to both parties. (The Shinfield Players' representations will be forwarded to the Secretary of State.)

F. **Services and Infrastructure Contributions**

5.57 Provision of, and contributions towards, highway improvements have been covered in Section C above. The proposed social building would provide a crèche facility which is expected to be operated by a crèche operator. The social building would also provide sports and social facilities for staff and any spare capacity could be let out to local community groups. The Meteorological Office would continue to provide public access to their Meteorological Library in the relocated premises and to provide source material etc. for schools.

G. **Concerns of the Parish Councils and local residents**

5.58 The issues of traffic and housing pressures, trees, ecology, building design and the Shinfield Players have been addressed above. Regarding any potential disturbance from the social club, this is shown to be sited on the site of the

existing Shinfield Players building who put on evening performances. The only residential properties nearby are the two caretakers dwellings at Foster Wheeler, which are vacant. The proposed social building would be approximately 400m from the nearest residential properties in Woodside Way. It is therefore considered that the proposed social building is unlikely to cause unacceptable levels of nuisance. (A letter has been sent to Shinfield Parish Council explaining that the report to the Development Control Committee on 28 June was an initial report for information only, that further comments could be accepted and that the application would be considered again by the Committee for determination of observations to be forwarded).

Overall conclusions

5.59 The Meteorological Office is an important organisation both nationally and locally and it is essential they relocate to new headquarter premises. National and local policies in principle support such proposals, subject to their not giving rise to unacceptable effects.

5.60 The chief issue of concern locally is the potential generation of additional traffic onto the local road network which is already congested at peak times. Effective proposals for, and implementation of, the Green Travel Plan, together with the proposed highway works and contributions are considered essential to avoid unacceptable levels of exacerbation of existing traffic problems.

5.61 The proposed development is also likely to generally result in increased pressure on housing in Central Berkshire through the 'knock-on' effect of re-occupation of the Meteorological Office's existing premises in Bracknell. This can be expected to be off-set only to some degree by including a significant number of residential units and significant reduction in office floorspace in their future redeveloped premises at London Road.

5.62 It is considered that the future detailed proposals can be sited and designed so as to take account of concerns regarding the Listed Building and trees.

5.63 The future of the Shinfield Players remains unresolved. Whilst this is a cause of local concern, taken in isolation, it is considered not of sufficient weight to cause the Council itself to object to the proposed development. However, it is considered that the Council should express its support in principle for the Shinfield Players and to support a resolution of the issue that is acceptable to both parties.

5.64 It is therefore considered that the Council should express its support for the proposed development and not to forward an objection in principle subject to the proposed legal agreement, conditions, informatives and observations set out in paragraphs 5.03-5.07 of this report under 'Suggested Action'.

Financial Implications

5.65 See main body of the report.

Environmental Implications

5.66 See main body of the report.

Consultation with Parish and Town Councils/Voluntary Sector Organisations

5.67 See main body of the report.

Equal Opportunities Implications

5.68 The proposed development, including the social building, would be expected to take account of the needs of the disabled at the detailed design stage.

Community Safety Implications

5.69 The site would be a secure installation.

Time Constraints

5.70 The Met. Office's time constraints are set out in the report

Background Papers	Dept. Where held
Application O/2000/1714	Environmental Services

Angela Odell

0118 988 5315

Shinfield
Parish Council
Clerk: Mrs. J Barnes, 36 Ryhill Way, Earley, Reading, Berkshire. RG6 4AZ
Tel/Fax: 0118 9547115

15th July 2000

Mrs A Odell
Case Officer
Wokingham District Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire

Dear Mrs Odell

Application No: 0/2000/1714 – Outline Proposals for Met Office facilities at Shinfield Park.

At the meeting of our Planning and Transportation committee on 5th July, it was resolved to record the comments below in respect of the above outline application in our parish. The proposals contained therein do not appear in the District's Local Plan but will have a major impact on our community and environment, and it is upon these impacts that we have concentrated our comments. However, we deplore the fact that we have been given only days to comment on a four volume submission. We must also record our grave concern that the application went before a Development Control Sub-Committee on 28th June, prior to our comments being called for by 14th July. For that determining committee not to have the local council comments before them, prior to making a decision on such a major development is unacceptable.

1) **Introductory Remarks** – Whilst recognising the applicant as a first class Globally acclaimed organisation that would bring prestige to the area with support from many local residents, we have major concerns about the application as submitted and wish to record a number of challenges as detailed below. Our members were also irritated by the constant reference to the location being in Reading (with even media focus being on the views of Reading MPs when it is outside their area), when in fact it lies entirely in our parish, in the district of Wokingham.

Continued....

0118 988 5315

2) **Traffic**- The implications of traffic generation by siting 1,400 new jobs in a full employment area which already has a road system operating over-capacity is a prime concern. The entire Transport Assessment whilst impressive in magnitude being an inch thick, is of little value assessing traffic generation and impact as it is essentially based on the 1996 Baseline Model, which is in itself flawed and inappropriate for predicting the future. This fact was established as Part 1 of the recent Public Inquiry into the District Local Plan, where it was used simply as a tool for making comparisons.

The base Model was developed for one purpose only: to assess and compare traffic mitigation measures proposed by the three development consortia competing to build 2,500 houses south of the M4. It was made clear, at the time of its construction that it was not suitable for predicting future traffic conditions, as the database did not reflect actual current Origin and Destination figures. The statistics used had been adjusted downwards to enable the Model to run, as otherwise, modeling a system at capacity with the software available, was not possible. Furthermore, the Baseline Model should not be used for predicting future traffic, as it cannot predict queue lengths, it cannot predict waiting times and it cannot model the peak-hour load spreading.

Therefore, basing conclusions, such as traffic levels and flows at Junction 11, on this Model, is a useless exercise. In addition, it was known that there was significant peak load spreading and latent demand, which could not be assessed correctly. It is noted that in the traffic analysis that peak load spreading has not been taken into account and no consideration of latent demand mentioned. It is clear that considering a single peak hour period in the case is not sufficient. Peak loading exists over a longer period than one hour and the peak hour is certainly not conveniently defined by an hour on the clock. Also, any communting analysis must take account of travelling time, which this does not.

The analysis provided does not consider both best and worse case traffic scenarios, nor does it look at the necessary 15 years ahead to prudently consider what effects the further growth in this important strategic developments area will have. We consider these are minimal and essential considerations for the community, which has long term aspirations for their living here.

In considering the traffic effects, it has been suggested that the 2,500 houses to be built south of the M4 will be available to the Met Office staff. This is NOT the case. These houses are being built to satisfy the needs of Reading's 20,000 jobs at and around Green Park. There will therefore be long term commuting for at least 750 of the Met Office employees. This is totally out of line with Government guidance on these matters and out of line with the emerging Local Transport Plan.

Continued...

We welcome the commitment to producing a Green Travel Plan which must be part of any Full Application and should include undertakings to support bus services from Winnersh Triangle to Shinfield Park, which would run through our community at Shinfield Rise, to the benefit of our parishioners. Furthermore, whilst endorsing the logic behind restricted parking provision, we are extremely concerned that this could lead to indiscriminate parking on the surrounding unrestricted road system, to the detriment of our residents.

Were the Council mindful to approve the application, major contributions should be sought to local infrastructure improvements including the funding of the proposed Option 2 Link Road Scheme, with a preferred siting alongside the motorway, rather that an proposed through the middle of a valuable wildlife habitat bounded by Whitley Wood Lane and the M4 motorway.

A final point on traffic issues is that in page 17, para 5.02 of the Planning Statement quotes from the Structure Plan, that in the interests of flexibility, new development may be permissible, where they do "not duly add transport problems of pressures for housing development". Our members are of the firm view that this proposal will do both.

3) **Economic and Employment Considerations** – There would appear to be an incomplete consideration of the other planning applications for the area. Noticeably absent are considerations for all other local commercial developments, which could generate additional 2,500 jobs within one kilometer of the Met Office site: these include Foster Wheeler plus the NIRD site, Church Farm and the Advanced Research Centre. In addition a further 25,000 new jobs will be generated within three kilometers of the site at green park, Reading International Business Park, Reading Gate and the Oracle Centre. As there is full employment in Shinfield, all these jobs will have to be filled by commuters. This scenario must be accurately assessed using the correct tools and current data.

Shinfield Parish is already an extremely stressed economic area. There is a total imbalance in housing provision compared to employment provision. House prices are now totally beyond households on below £30,000to £50,000pa. There is totally inadequate affordable housing provision. The communities are rapidly becoming unbalanced with the numbers of teachers, nurses, tradesman, local government workers and other modest income work groups declining. Surveys have indicated that there is less than 1% unemployment in the area. There is therefore no requirement for additional jobs.

The parish population is already forecast by WDC to grow by an unacceptable 70% in the period 1997-2006 and will rapidly create even more imbalance, as there will be few if any additional lower income group families able to migrate to this 'hot spot'. The planned provision of 500 affordable houses will be taken up by local residents already on the house waiting lists made longer by years of neglect in this sector of the housing market whilst planning has been developer led. Adding further to this growth requirement in this period is clearly not acceptable. Indeed it is even possible, given the need to build and sell at rates in excess of 500 houses a year.

Continued...

4) **Ecology** – The site has very considerable biodiversity, with two types of deer seen regularly, a wide ranging bird population in the ancient woodland which contains the rich flora associated with such sites and will be designated a Wildlife heritage Site (WHS). A substantial buffer zone around the WHS will be required and this needs to be reviewed.

Poor if any provision is made for wildlife corridors to and from the WHS. Within close proximity are two other undeveloped sites, Pearmans Corpse and the wildlife area to the south of Foster Wheeler building, between Whitley Wood and the M4 motorway.

The site is on the prominent SW to NE ridge line with its unpredictable hydrogeology. As the applicant's Ecological Appraisal concedes, the site has been neglected over a long period of time and numerous gullies and run-offs on the north west slopes have caused problems over the years and are clearly not understood by the current land occupiers. Despite local representations, the MOD has failed to respond to resident's fears, and flooding and subsidence caused by water run-off from the ridge has been experienced. It would appear that deliberate failure to keep gullies clear for the purpose of their creation and in some cases deliberately blocking them, has been the practice over many years. This problem has not been addressed and with further development of the site will inevitably be worse.

The site is very well wooded and it would be an unacceptable loss to see numerous mature trees unnecessarily sacrificed. We are concerned about the removal of groups of trees as summarised on page 26 without knowledge of the numbers in each group. However, it is recognised that some trees will inevitably have to go. Careful monitoring of this will be needed and permission for named individuals from the parish to have access to the site for this purpose is requested. Access should be provided on request at 24 hours notice. All individuals would observe whatever safety regulations were in force at the time of inspection. We would urge that the perimeter screening, which we are encouraged to see is to be retained, should be improved for the benefit of residents in adjoining properties.

Finally on matters of ecology, we request that in any consideration of approval for this application, consideration should be given to imposing conditions opening up the areas of Ancient woodland for employment by members of the local community and general public.

5) **Building Design** – We trust that the visuals provided, depicting the proposed building perspectives (Typical Section & Elevation Option S4B) are authentic in terms of the portrayed roofline, with only a couple of slender masts. We consider that any further masts or antennae should be strictly controlled.

Continued...

6) **Shinfield Players Theatre** – Whilst passing reference, relating only to its removal, is made to the existence of this very significant local community facility which is established on the development site, scant regard is given in the proposals to its future well-being. Its future welfare is of paramount importance to this council and the assurances given by Mr Peter Ewins, the Chief Executive of the Met Office at a recent site visit to the current Bracknell facility, were well received by the local council members. Whilst we would wish to leave it to the management of the Shinfield Players to negotiate the details of any proposal for their future, we cannot over-emphasise our anxiety for their continuance.

7) **Section 106 Agreement** – In recognition of the major impact that this proposed development would have in the communities that we represent, we would expect that if the District Council is minded to grant permission, a significant 'developer contribution' would be negotiated with the applicant under Section 106 provision of the Act, taking particular regard to the 'Wish list' of benefits appropriate to our parish, submitted by this council.

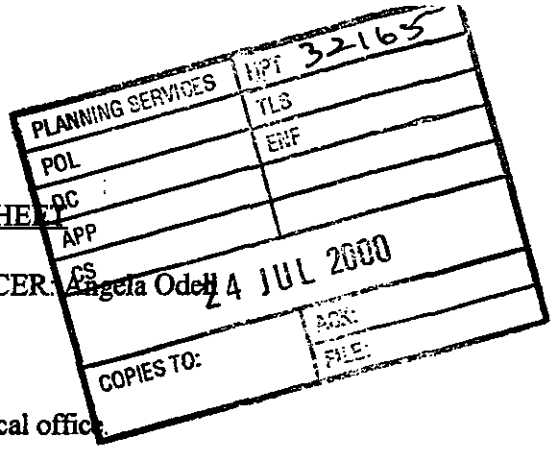
In conclusion, we seek assurances that our comments as detailed above, which have taken considerable time and effort by our members to compile, should be reported in full to members of the Development Control Sub-Committee, before any decision is taken.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Sampson

Mrs Tracy Sampson
Assistant Clerk (0118 9885315)

Copies to:
Mr M Bryant, Mr B Patman, Mr A Pollock – District Councilors
Mr H Hawes of Shinfield Players



TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATION SHEET

APPLICATION NO: F/2000/1714 PLANNING OFFICER: Angela Odell

PARISH: EARLEY (Shinfield Parish Application)

PROPOSAL: Erection of building for use as a meteorological office

ADDRESS: Shinfield Park

APPLICANT: The Met. Office

Thank you for allowing Earley Town Council the opportunity to comment on this application. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is an extremely prestigious proposal, of paramount concern to the Town Council is the amount of additional traffic which will be generated on a road infrastructure which is already extremely overstretched. Whilst the road improvements, which form part of this application are noted, it was felt that these improvements were flawed. Councillors felt that the proposed new roundabouts should be of a larger scale, and that an additional roundabout was required outside the entrance to the Foster Wheeler Building.

The Town Council is currently involved in compiling a Transport Policy for the Town, which is still at a very initial stage. However, one of the major problem areas which has been identified is the amount of through traffic through the Town and also the amount of congestion at the two access points onto the M4, i.e. junction 11 and junction 10 via the A329 and the Loddon Bridge junction. It was the intention of the Town Council that the document would be presented as a whole to the District Council. However, in view of this planning application and the other current application in this area at the former Shire Hall site, Councillors have requested that one of the proposals to be contained in the Transport Policy should now be given serious consideration by the District Council. This is the creation of a junction 10a onto the M4, which could be created at a suitable location off Lower Earley Way. Councillors felt that consideration could be given to making this junction access only, to avoid traffic leaving the motorway at this point and thus increasing the problem of through traffic in the Town. As previously stated, the Town Council's Transport Policy is at a very initial stage, and it is acknowledged that this suggestion requires considerable more research and thought. However, it is felt that the current applications being considered would give the District Council an ideal opportunity to seriously consider Councillors' suggestion of the creation of this additional junction onto the M4.

Of concern also to Councillors when they discussed this application was the increased pressure which would be created on the already over-stretched housing stock. It is acknowledged that some staff may not wish to relocate, although this will, of course, create its own problems in an increase in commuter traffic. However, this area of the District is already under pressure to allow more residential development on the very valuable green gaps on the Shinfield Parish boundary, and this proposal can only serve to increase this pressure.

Finally, Councillors noted with some concern the loss of the Shinfield Players Theatre. It is requested that, should the Development Control Sub-Committee be mindful to approve this application, a condition of the approval is that the Met Office satisfactorily negotiates with the Shinfield Players to ensure that suitable alternative accommodation is found for them. It is also requested that a condition be imposed requiring the running of shuttle buses between the site and the proposed park and ride scheme near to junction 11.

A copy of these observations has been forward to the Head of Engineering Services.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: 20 JUL 2000

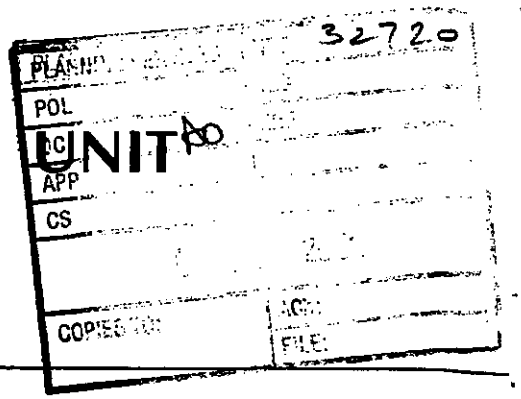
CLERK TO EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

The Berkshire Unitary Authorities'

JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING UNIT

St. Mary's House, c/o Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead SL6 1RF
Tel. 01628 796749 Fax. 01628 796739

Head of Strategic Planning and Transport: Stuart Hylton



Please ask for: Phil Gill
Direct Line: 01628 796518
Email: phillip.gill@rbwm.gov.uk
Our Ref: M/3/6
Your Ref: O/2000/1714

Angela Odell,
Planning Services,
Wokingham District Council,
PO Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
RG40 1WR.

4 August, 2000

Dear Angela,

Proposed Met Office Relocation to Shinfield Park

Thank you for consulting the Joint Unit on this proposal. I note that it is a consultation under Circular 18/84 and therefore not legally a planning application. For this reason I am not phrasing this letter in the normal form of object/not object; rather I am merely commenting on the issues raised and their relationship to strategic planning policy.

These comments have now been approved by the Chairman and Vice chairmen of the Joint Committee. Please ensure that these comments are passed on to the relevant Secretary of State.

Location

The location within an urban area and on a largely brownfield site with the potential for good access by non-car modes means that the proposal accords with Structure Plan Policies OS1 and LD1. However, I have seen no evidence that a sequential test has been carried out as required by PPG6 (paragraph 1.15). Only sites already owned by the applicant appear to have been examined as options for the proposed relocation (this site and Beaufort Park, Bracknell). PPG6 requires a much wider assessment to be undertaken. In this case a search for sites within the urban areas of Bracknell (including Amen Corner), Reading, Wokingham, Camberley and possibly Maidenhead would seem appropriate.

It is also important to note that permission should not be granted for development on both of the proposed sites. This would give tacit approval to the principle of commercial development on whichever site was not taken forward for the Met Office relocation. Certainly in the case of Beaufort Park this would be inappropriate.

Employment

The new Met Office building in itself would appear to accord with Policy BU1. As a development to meet the needs of an existing "firm" in Berkshire it accords with the criteria in the first part of the policy. On the assumption that the scheme is a straight relocation and involves no increase in staff across the Met Office's sites in Berkshire, then the second part of the policy, which seeks to ensure that extra housing and transport pressures are not created, would also be satisfied. Although there would be some transport pressures in the short term, with staff having longer journeys to work, this is likely to settle down over time.

My concern is with the future use of the site the Met Office plan to vacate in London Road, Bracknell. The above reasoning on BU1 will only be correct if there is no significant employment development on the London Road site once the relocation takes place. I understand that Bracknell Forest Borough Council is currently preparing a development brief for the London Road site, and I am hopeful that this will reflect the employment issues. I appreciate that this is outside of your Council's control, but it is a crucial issue which must be considered by the decision maker in this case, whom I understand to be the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Transport

A number of points in the Transport Assessment (TA) require further analysis or justification. Strategic matters are as follows.

The agents have agreed the principle of providing a Green Travel Plan, and this is welcomed. Given the large scale and potential impact of the development, the principles of such a Plan should be firmly established before any decision is taken to proceed with the development. In particular, staff surveys to establish travel needs and preferences will need to be carried out before the move. The Plan would benefit from incentives for staff to relinquish a parking space and from a commitment to the provision of real time public transport information, and should also contain a commitment to limit the number of car journeys to and from the site. Until the Plan is secured by legal agreement the proposal will conflict with Policy T1.

Provision for pedestrians and cyclists will need to be made in the design of the junctions, and a cycle route along Shinfield Road should be secured in advance of the development to satisfy Policies T2 and T3.

The TA appears to have overestimated the number of staff who would readily switch from car use to more sustainable modes. As a result there is insufficient attention given to parking management (on and off site), contrary to Policy T6. To comply with this policy there would need to be an indication as to what parking restrictions were to be imposed locally.

It will be essential for any transport proposals to be fully integrated with the Reading Urban Area Package and other developments in the local area. For instance, it may be advantageous to coordinate transport proposals such as shuttle buses with those for Foster Wheeler and the current application for development at the former Shire Hall.

I trust the above will be useful to you. I will be responding separately to Bracknell Forest Borough Council on the companion proposal to this one (relocation to Beaufort Park, Bracknell).

Yours sincerely,

P.A. Gill

Phillip Gill
Senior Planner

cc Martin Bourne, BFBC
Andrew Dawe, RBC

Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL

PL... VICES	RT
POL	TLS
	ENF
...P	
CS	33440
24 AUG 2000	
COPIES TO: AO	ACK:
	FILE:

Tony Lear
Director of Environment

Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 7TD
☎ 0118 939 0900
DX 40124 Reading (Castle Street)
Fax: 0118 958 9770
Minicom 0118 939 0700

Our Ref: 00/00738/WOKADJ/AD

Mr J Mitchell (Development Control Manager)
Wokingham District Council
Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham RG40 1WR

Direct: ☎ 0118 9390023

22 August 2000

Your contact is: **Andrew Dawe – Senior Planning Officer**

Dear Mr Mitchell

RE: Meteorological Office training college, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Reading. Proposal: Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as Meteorological Office (your ref. Angela Odell/O/2000/1714).

I refer to your letter dated 20th June 2000 consulting Reading Borough Council on the above planning application.

The proposal was considered by our Planning Applications Committee on 16th August 2000. The decision was taken to raises a holding objection to the proposal until the following issues have been adequately addressed: the applicant needs to demonstrate that a comprehensive assessment of suitable alternative sites closer to urban centres has been undertaken in accordance with the sequential approach; that appropriate measures, works and contributions have been agreed and secured by a tripartite legal agreement (WDC, RBC & Met. Office) to help achieve a balanced approach to transport matters in accordance with Policies LD5 and BU1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan and the Reading Urban Area Package; and a Green Travel Plan has been submitted to and has been agreed by Wokingham District Council in consultation with Reading Borough Council in accordance with Draft Revision PPG13 (appropriate measures, incentives, targets and reviews to be secured through a tripartite legal agreement with WDC, RBC & Met. Office). If these issues are not adequately addressed the Council believes that the proposal would be contrary to policies LD1 (Sustainable Development), BU1 (Assessment of Proposals for Further Business, Industrial, Distribution and Storage Development), T1 (Integrated Approach to Transport), T2 (Provision for Pedestrians), T3 (Provision for Cyclists), T6 (Control of On-Street and Off-Street Parking) of the Berkshire Structure Plan.

In the event that the Meteorological Office choose to relocate to Beaufort Park near Bracknell or elsewhere (including relocation of the Meteorological Office training college from Shinfield Park),

the Council would strongly urge Wokingham District Council to allocate the existing Shinfield Road site for housing at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with the objectives of PPG3 and the adopted Structure Plan.

In the event that the proposal is agreed by WDC and in the event that WDC and the applicants agree to enter into the legal agreement set out above, then it was agreed that officers of Reading Borough Council should enter into the legal agreement set out above to secure the appropriate transport measures, works and contributions and to secure a Green Travel Plan.

I have enclosed a copy of the report to the Planning Applications Committee for your information.

Yours sincerely

David Breeze
Planning Manager - Implementation

Planning & Transportation

Director of Planning & Transportation : George Kingston MA (Oxon) DipTP MRTPI
Borough Planning Officer : Mike Holmes BSc (Econ) DipTP MRTPI

This matter is being dealt with by: Nicky Linihan-Mardon Tel: 01344 351180

PLANNING SERVICES APPT 32863
DC ENF
APP
CS
10 AUG 2000
COPIES TO: ACK:
FILE:

BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL

Time Square
Market Street
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG12 1JD
☎ 01344 424642
Fax 01344 351104
DX 33611 Bracknell
Minicom 01344 352045
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Our Ref: DC/6/3
Your Ref: Angela Odell 0/2000/1714

Environmental Services department,
Planning Services,
P.O. Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berkshire. RG40 1WR
F.A.O. Mrs. Angela Odell

7 August 2000

Dear Sirs,

Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield. Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

I refer to your letter of 20 June 2000 regarding the above and would thank you for the opportunity to comment.

In considering the proposals I would make the following observations:

- Careful consideration will need to be given to the strategic employment issues relating to the proposal, with regard being paid to Policy BU1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991 – 2006 and in particular the elements relating to additional housing pressure and transportation issues.

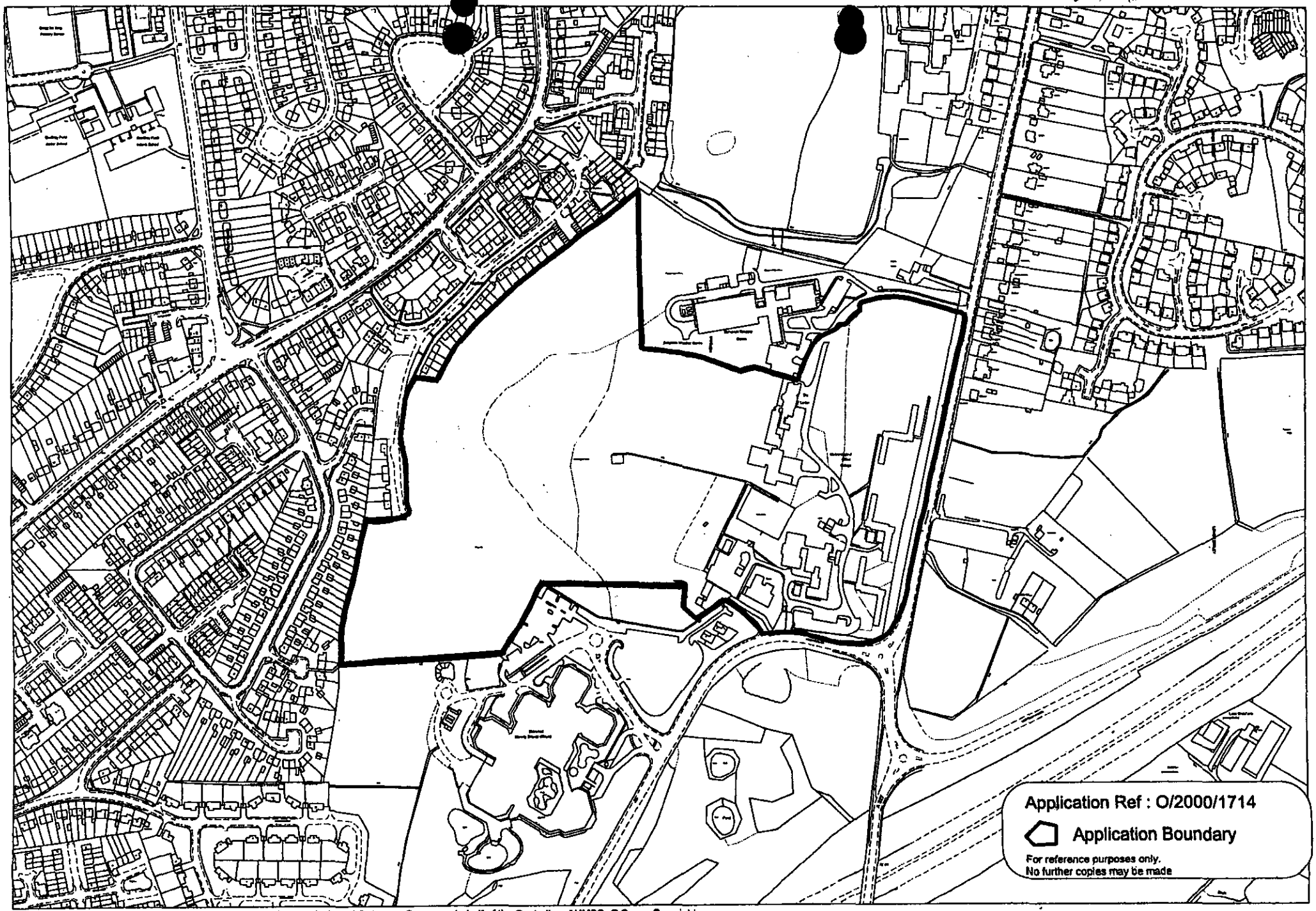
- It is noted that the Transport Assessment submitted in support of the proposals does not give any detailed consideration to the potential impacts on the highway network within the eastern Wokingham and western Bracknell areas. The Assessment provides information on the residential locations of staff currently working for the Meteorological Office. A significant proportion of these live within Bracknell Forest Borough to the south of the town centre. Changes on local commuting patterns with respect to car borne journeys are likely to have some impact on the local highway network in the above mentioned area during peak hours. This is of particular relevance bearing in mind the close proximity to the proposed housing allocation in the emerging Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan at Peacock Farm. In order to limit any impact it is vital that a Company Travel Plan is developed and implemented on first occupation, should the development take place, and that suitable monitoring is carried out. The Borough Council would welcome the opportunity for input into the development of such a plan.

I hope this is of assistance. If you wish to discuss this matter further then please do not hesitate to contact my colleague Nicky Linihan-Mardon on 01344 351180.

Yours sincerely

995

Mike Holmes
Borough Planning Officer



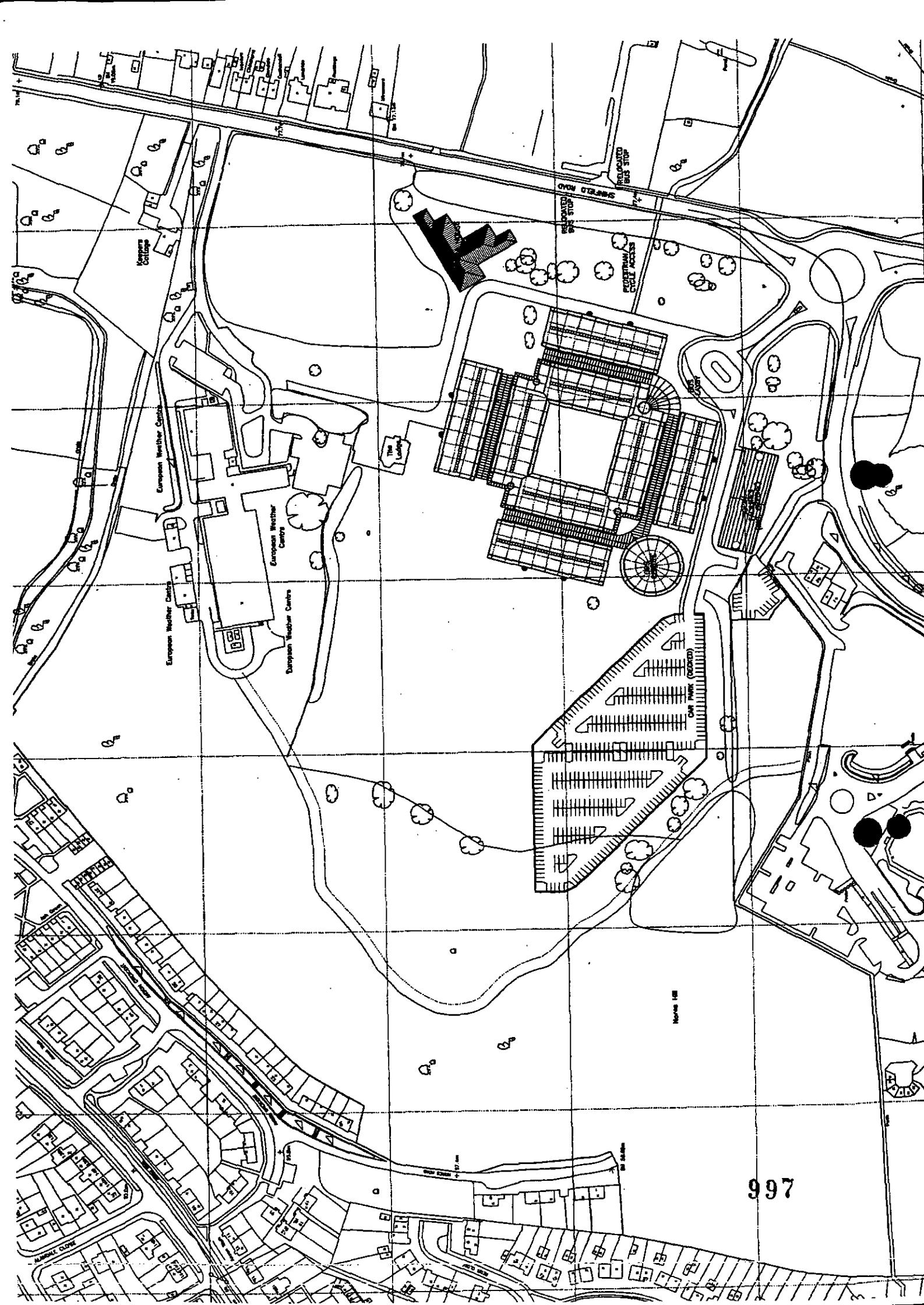
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

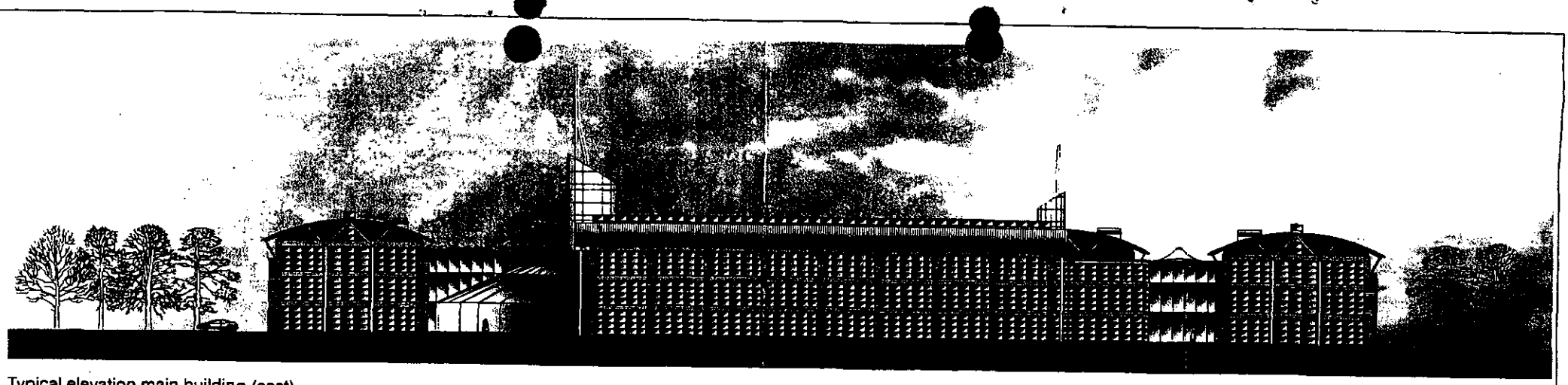
Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

6 September 2000

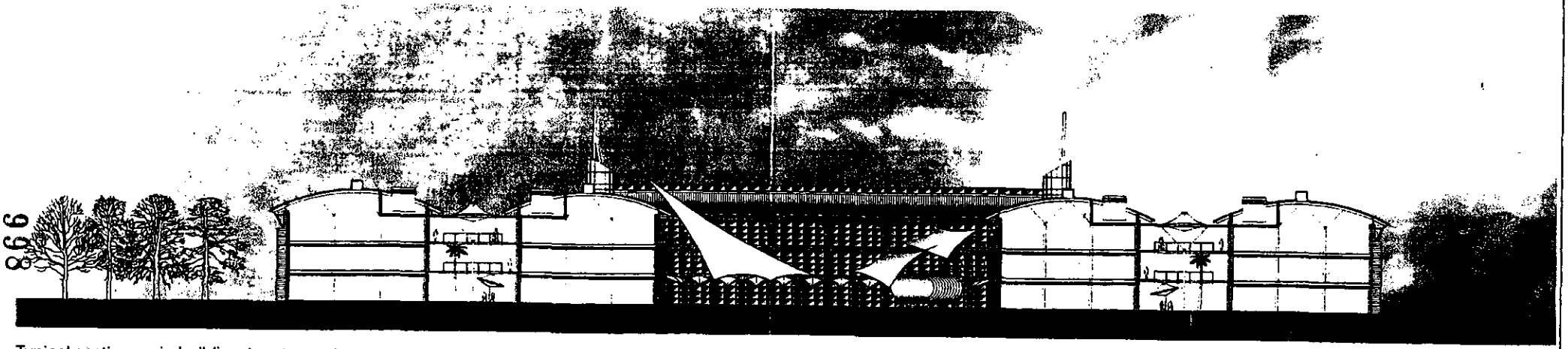
Scale: 1 : 5000

N
W E
S

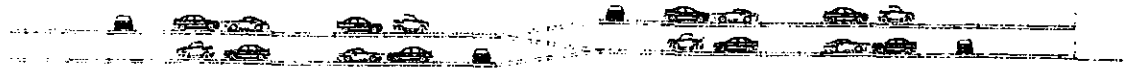

RELOCATED BUS STOP
PEDESTRIAN CYCLE ACCESS
RELOCATED BUS STOP
Keepers Cottage
European Weather Centre
European Weather Centre
European Weather Centre
The Lodge
CAR PARK (DOCKED)
997



Typical elevation main building (east)



Typical section main building (west - east)



Typical section car park (west - east)

Project
Met. Office relocation
Shinfield Park, Reading

Drawing Title
Typical Section & Elevation
Option S4B

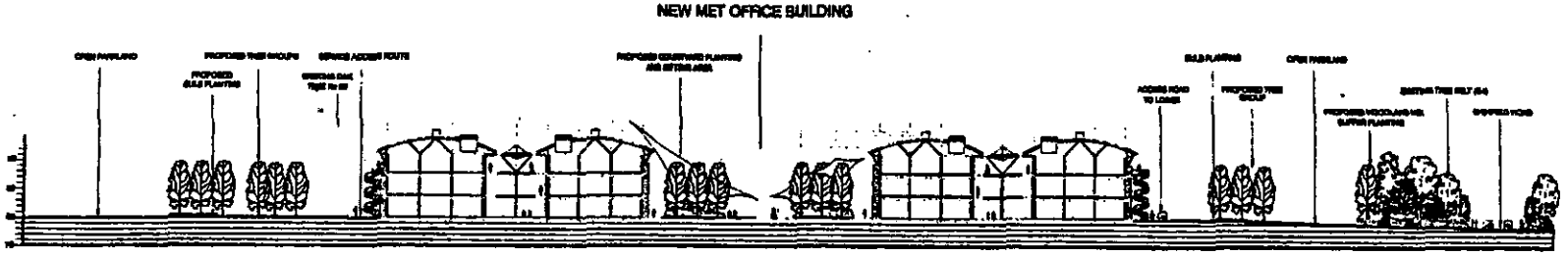
Date	Scale	Drawn by
08-05-00	1:250 (A1) 1:500 (A3)	NPB
Project No	Drawing No	Revision
9906	SK008	-

Barton Willmore
Architecture

Architects Master Planners Town Planners
Environmental Consultants Project Services

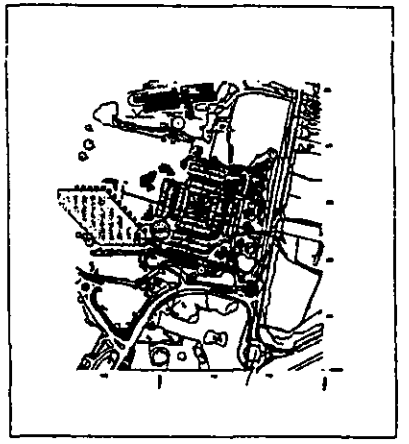
The Barton Willmore Partnership, Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7BW
Tel: 0118 943 0000 Fax: 0118 943 0001
e-mail: architects@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

866



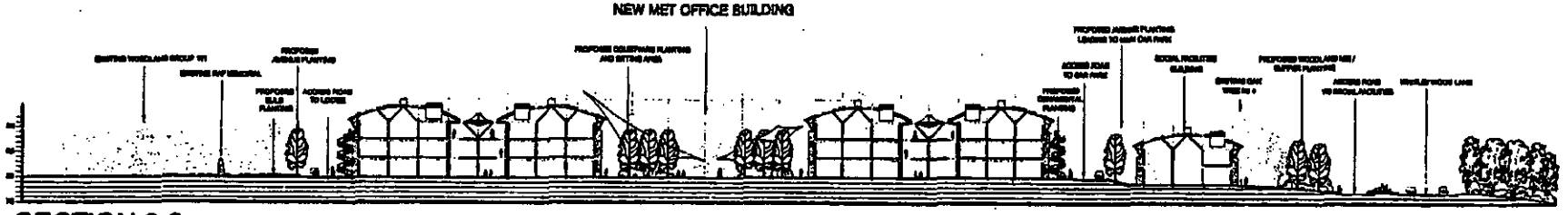
SECTION 1-1

SCALE 1:500



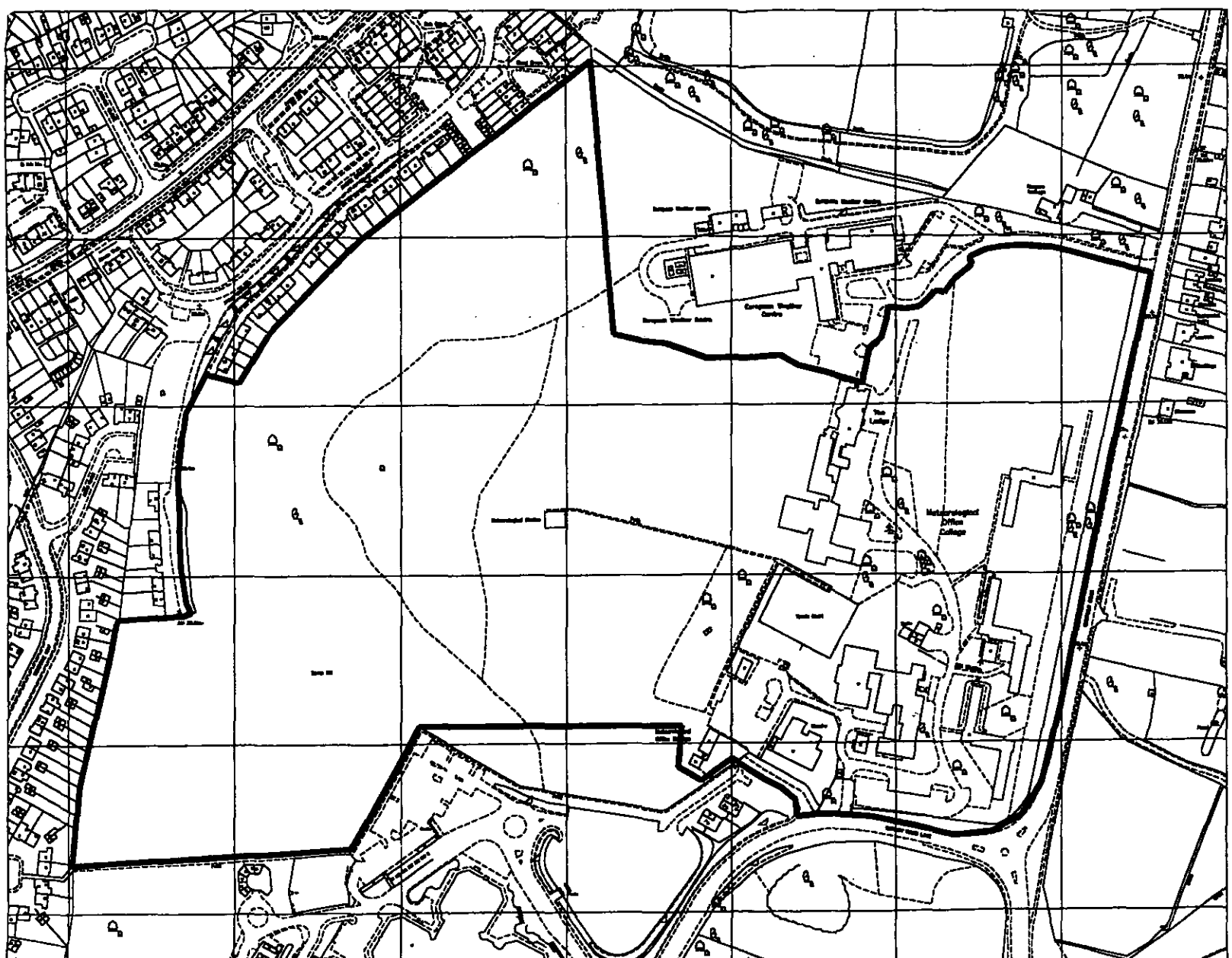
SECTION LOCATION PLAN

SCALE 1:5000



SECTION 2-2

SCALE 1:500



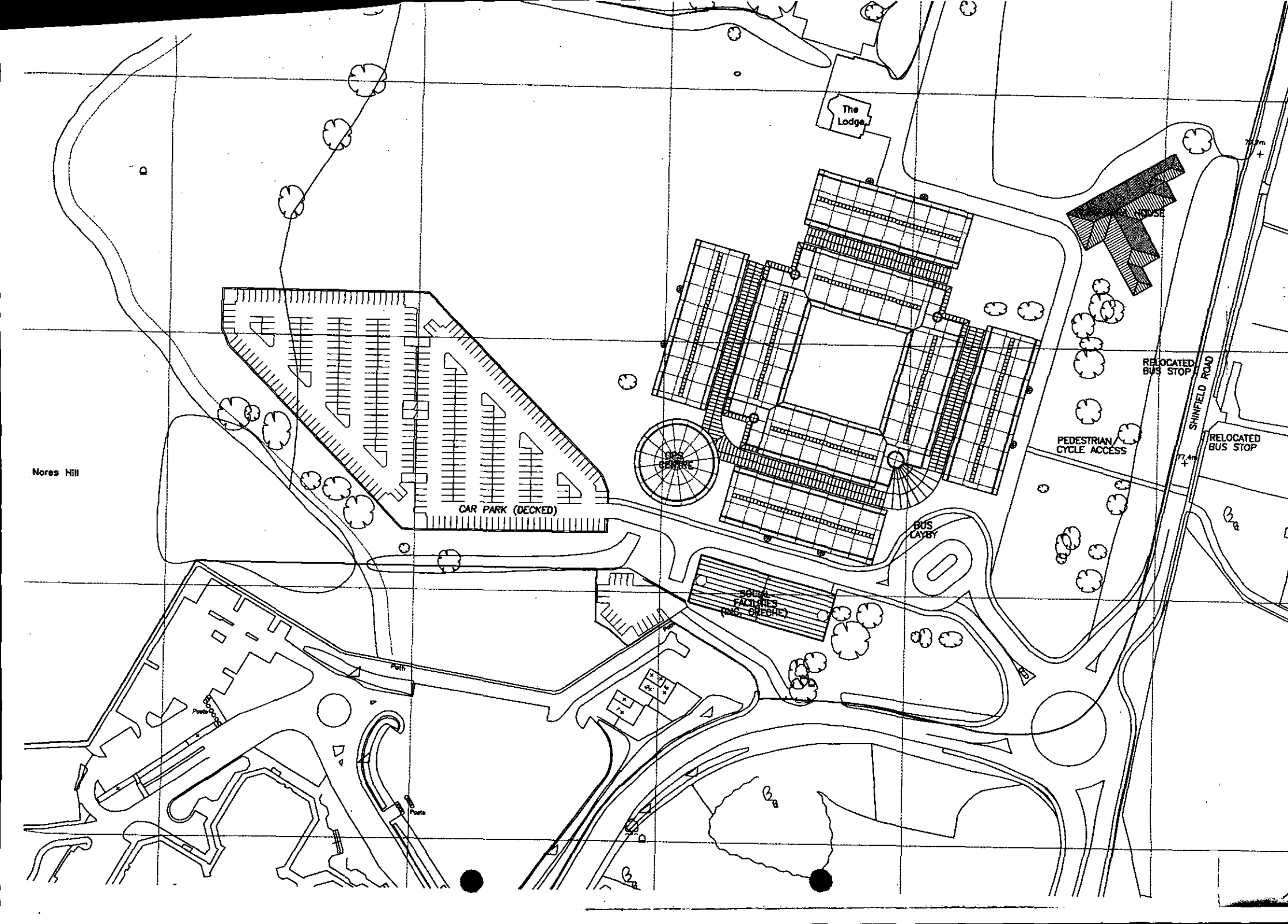
Project
SHINFIELD PARK
MET OFFICE RELOCATION

Drawing Title
SITE LOCATION PLAN

Date	Scale	Drawn by
04.08.2010	1:1250 @ A1	CDK

Project No.	Drawing No.	Revision
9906	P1	-

Barton Willmore
Planning


The Lodge
CAR PARK (DECKED)
CPS CENTRE
SOCIAL FACILITIES (INC. CRECHE)
BUS LAYBY
PEDESTRIAN CYCLE ACCESS
RELOCATED BUS STOP
SHINFIELD ROAD
RELOCATED BUS STOP
77.4m
Nores Hill
Path
Posts

WARD: Shinfield

6.00 APPLICATION O/2000/1714 PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

Purpose of Report

6.01 To advise members of receipt of the above application.

Suggested Action

6.02 To ask members to note receipt of the above application and to advise officers of any concerns or requests for further information.

Background Information

6.03 The Meteorological Office is consulting WDC regarding its proposed development under arrangements used by government departments under Circular 18/84. (The Meteorological Office are part of the Ministry of Defence.)

The agents have explained that the Met. Office is a world leader in meteorology and climatology and is the forefront of scientific and technological development. Its existing headquarters buildings in Bracknell are outdated and too costly to be worth modernising, and are inconveniently located in several buildings. The proposal for new building at their Shinfield Park site has been made because they already own it. (It currently accommodates their training operation.) This site is also attractive to them as it would strengthen existing links with the European Centre for Medium Weather Forecasting (on adjacent land) and with Reading University. The Met. Office is also consulting with Bracknell Forest BC under Circular 18/84 with regard to the construction of a similar, alternative headquarters building at their Beaufort Park site. (Beaufort Park is sited north of Nine Mile Ride and east of Old Wokingham Road in Bracknell Forest BC.) Following both consultations, The Met. Office will consider their position with regard to relocation. At present relocation away from the Reading-Bracknell area has not been considered in detail, nor have other non Met. Office owned sites in the locality. The future use of the Met. Office's London Road, Bracknell site will be the subject of a planning brief to be prepared in conjunction with Bracknell Forest BC. It is envisaged that a mixed use redevelopment could take place on the site, including opportunities for new housing.

The Proposal

6.04 The proposal is in outline for a 33,351 m² headquarters office/computer/ ancillary teaching building, car parking, a social building (including creche) and an accommodation block for students. The indictive plans show a 3 storey office block and a decked car park with 750 spaces . About 1,500 staff are expected (nearly all transferred from Bracknell). All existing buildings on the site would be demolished except the Grade II Listed Lodge. The main access would be directly onto the existing roundabout on Shinfield Road. A

Green Transport Plan is proposed, including a possible shuttle bus service to Winnersh Triangle Station to collect staff, many of whom currently live in Bracknell and Wokingham. A contribution is also proposed to highway improvements in the local area, which may include re-modelling the roundabout and the WDC scheme for proposed road improvements to the B3270.

Planning Issues.

6.05 The site is within a settlement boundary and an initial assessment has not identified any obvious physical or visual site objections. The main issues are therefore considered to be the strategic ones of potential pressures on housing and transport. Regarding housing, this is essentially considered to be an issue for central Berkshire as a whole in this case. The agents have pointed out that the proposal is essentially a relocation of existing staff from offices nearby in Bracknell, and that a new settlement for up to 2,500 houses is proposed to be nearby. The extent to which additional housing pressure is a concern will depend partly if not mainly on what happens to the existing vacated sites in Bracknell; in particular the amount of new housing (if any) which could offset this potential pressure, and the amount of office/ employment floorspace which would add to pressure in any mixed use redevelopment. The highway officer will assess the effect of the proposal on highways and transport.

The alternative site at Beaufort Park in Bracknell Forest BC is outside a settlement boundary and in a gap between settlements.

Consultations

6.06 WDC expect to be consulted on the proposal at Beaufort Park, and we have sent consultations to Bracknell Forrest BC, Reading BC and the Joint Strategic Planning Unit (amongst others).

Equal Opportunities Implications

6.07 None

Financial Implications

6.08 Contributions towards highway improvements locally are proposed. Other contributions towards services and infrastructure may be requested.

Consultations with Parish and Town Councils/Voluntary Sector Organisations

6.09 Shinfield Parish Council and Earley Town Council have been consulted and any comments received will be reported.

Environmental Implications

6.10 Will be assessed when the application is reported to the Committee for observations to be sent to the Met. Office.

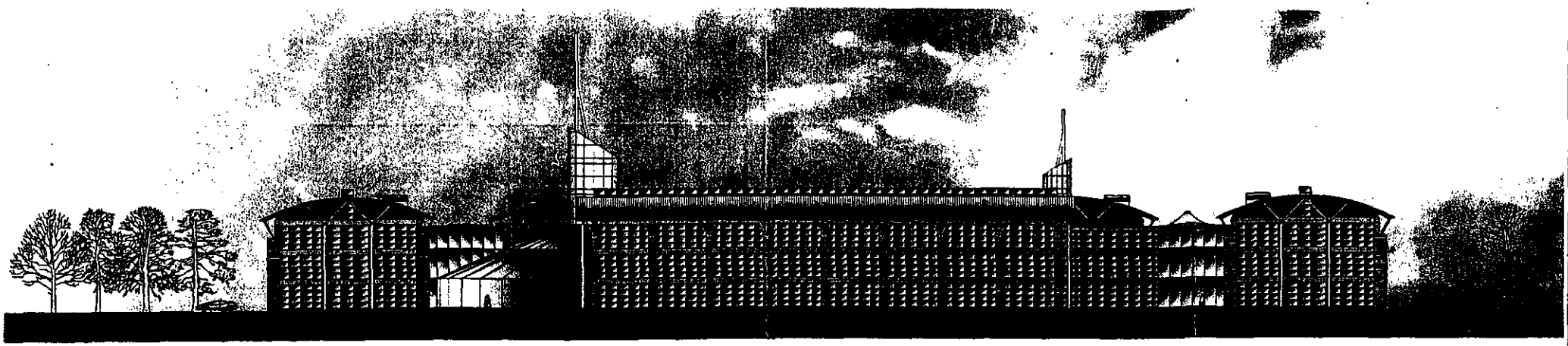
Time Constraints

6.11 As the new accommodation is required by the Met. Office by the end of 2002, observations from WDC are required as soon as possible.

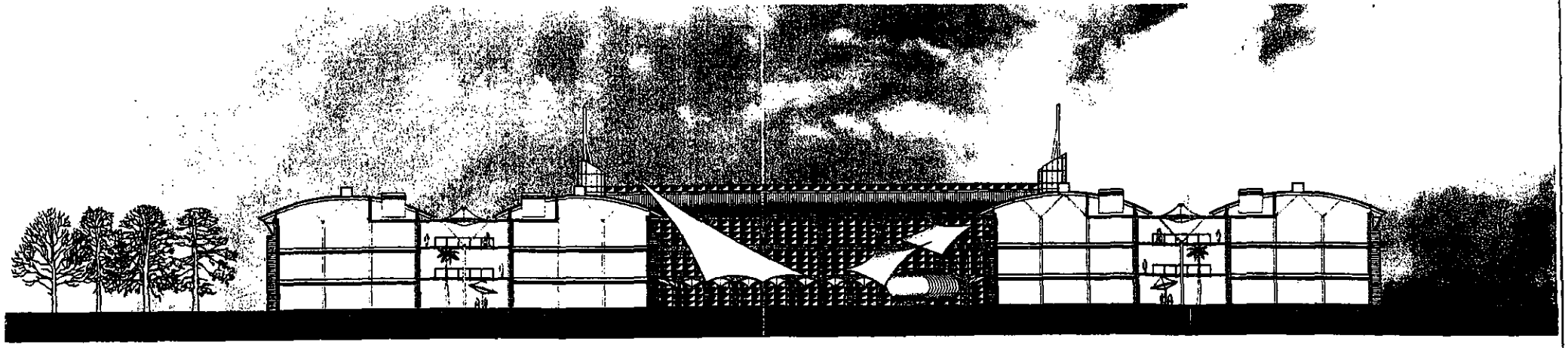
Background Papers	Department Where Held
Planning Application O/2000/1714	Environmental Services

Angela Odell

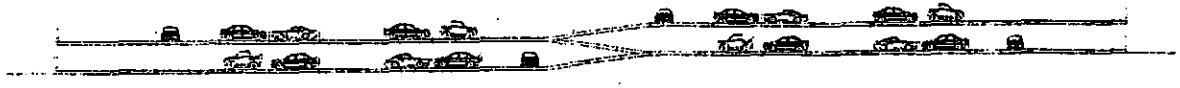
16.06.00



Typical elevation main building (east)



Typical section main building (west - east)



Typical section car park (west - east)

Project
Met. Office relocation
Shinfield Park, Reading

Drawing Title
Typical Section & Elevation
Option S4B

Date	Scale	Drawn by
08-05-00	1:250 (A1) 1:500 (A3)	HPB
Project No	Drawing No	Revision
9906	SK008	-

Barton Willmore
Architecture

Architects Master Planners Town Planners
Environmental Consultants Project Services

The Barton Willmore Partnership Reading Limited
Registered in England No. 2811 Blagrave Street
Tel: 0118 943 0000 Fax: 0118 943 0001
Email: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

Angela Odell

From: Karen Court
Sent: 12 June 2000 12:24
To: Angela Odell
Subject: FW: Met Office, Shinfield

For info
Karen Court

-----Original Message-----
From: Helen Gates
Sent: Monday, June 12, 2000 12:21 PM
To: Karen Court
Subject: RE: Met Office, Shinfield

Is 3pm Wednesday OK - perhaps you would like to remind Karen/Angela of the Open Evening at Bracknell Met Office on 26 June at 7.30pm which has also gone to relevant members.

Helen Gates

-----Original Message-----
From: Karen Court
Sent: 12 June 2000 11:41
To: Helen Gates
Subject: FW: Met Office, Shinfield

If it needs to be this week, it will have to be this pm or Wed pm

Karen

-----Original Message-----
From: Jane Earl
Sent: Monday, June 12, 2000 11:26 AM
To: Angela Odell; Karen Satterford
Cc: John R Mitchell; Helen Gates
Subject: RE: Met Office, Shinfield

could we have abrief conversation about this, please. I will ask helen toiarrange

jane

-----Original Message-----
From: Angela Odell
Sent: 12 June 2000 08:10
To: Jane Earl; Karen Satterford
Cc: John R Mitchell
Subject: Met Office, Shinfield

Dear Jane and Karen

Under DoE Circular 18/84 we have received the application from the Met. Office for 37,160 sq.m floorspace, including 3 storey 33,351 sq.m. office block with ancillary teaching and computer accommodation. (The rest is student accommodation and social facilities).

If you wish to discuss/would like any further information, please ask me.

Angela Odell (Case Officer)

Angela Odell

From: Liz Gibbons
Sent: 12 June 2000 09:55
To: Angela Odell
Cc: Jim Dunning
Subject: RE: Met Office, Shiinfield

Angi
Please advertise as contrary to the development plan. I say this on a precautionery basis. It may be contrary to the development plan (policy BU1 of the BSP) as a result of highway impact. Unless there is evidence that the sites in Bracknell are to be redeveloped for uses other than B1 it may also add to pressure for housing.

Liz

-----Original Message-----
From: Angela Odell
Sent: 12 June 2000 07:56
To: Liz Gibbons
Cc: Jim Dunning
Subject: Met Office, Shiinfield
Importance: High

Dear Liz

I have received the application for 37,160 sq.m including 33,351 sq.m office and ancillary teaching and computer operations block under under Dept. of Environment Circular 18/84 - the rest is social and student accommodation. Should I advertise the application as contrary to development plan?

Thanks

Angi

BARTO WILLMORE

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Background to the proposal

3.0 Brief description of the site and the proposed development.

4.0 The planning policy context

5.0 Summary of the planning issues

6.0 Conclusions

ANNEXES TO THE STATEMENT

1. Landscape Appraisal and Assessment

2. Transport Report incorporating "a Green Transport/Travel Plan"

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Met. Office is a world leader in meteorology and climatology employing some 2,200 staff worldwide and is in the forefront of scientific and technological development. Its headquarters building at Bracknell was built in the early 1960's and is now increasingly outmoded as a building to serve The Met. Office's role as a world class weather and environmental service provider which is reliant on even more sophisticated computer and telecommunications equipment.

1.2 The Met. Office is therefore consulting Wokingham District Council regarding its proposed development under arrangements used by government departments under Department of the Environment Circular 18/84. The proposal is the construction at Shinfield Park of a new purpose built headquarters building; student accommodation block; social facilities building and associated parking deck, to provide accommodation for some 1,400 staff and specialist telecommunications and computer equipment. The existing college teaching facilities on site would be incorporated within the new development.

1.3 This Statement provides the background to the proposed new headquarters building at Shinfield Park including the reasons for such a relocation. It explains the proposals and shows how they have been developed in the context of planning policies at national, regional and local level. This statement also includes an architectural design statement accompanying a set of drawings (SK007B and SK008) prepared by Barton Willmore Architecture illustrating the proposed building, showing how it would sit on the site and its relationship to retained buildings on site. The illustrative drawings are intended to show how a building of this mass could be accommodated on site and includes an indicative elevation and section through the building. The drawings also indicate how a new vehicular access could be provided to the site from the reconfigured A327/B3270 Black Boy northern roundabout.

1.4 Accompanying the Statement are the following related documents:

- a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, prepared by Barton Willmore Environmental, describing the assessment of the site and the visual effects of the new building in the surrounding area;

- a Transport Report, prepared by WSP, setting out the transport proposals associated with the scheme, including the limitation of car parking provision; and the proposed development of The Met. Office's Green Transport/Travel Plan;

2.0 BACKGROUND TO PROPOSALS

2.1 The Met Office is an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Defence and has operated as a Trading Fund since April 1996. As the UK's National Meteorological Service it operates at the forefront of scientific and technological development, and occupies a world leading position in meteorology and climatology with an expanding, and increasingly global, customer base. The Met Office employs 2,200 staff of which some 40% are spread around the world with approximately 1,400 staff at London Road, Bracknell, at Beaufort Park, Easthampstead and at Shinfield Park, Reading.

2.2 The Met Office presently occupy premises at London Road roundabout, Bracknell (1.8 hectares) which is their main headquarters building together with four adjacent leasehold buildings and two other buildings leased in the Bracknell area. In addition their site at Beaufort Park, Easthampstead,(27 hectares) provides a technical development and instrumentation division, whilst the site at Shinfield Park, Reading (17.6 hectares) is the present home of The Met Office College. Over recent years changes in The Met. Office's business requirements have been accommodated, in part, through the leasing and disposal of land and property, mainly in the Bracknell area. This has resulted in the workforce being spread across several sites making communication between staff more difficult.

2.3 The Met. Office's London Road premises have now been judged to be unfit for purpose, with continued occupation not sustainable in the medium or long term. The premises are outdated and unsuitable for the long term future of the organisation.

2.4 The existing London Road buildings are of an age (early 1960's) where problems are now caused by inefficient configuration, limited floor to ceiling heights, inflexible cellular and structural layout and multi-storey construction. Such factors individually and combined inhibit the flexibility of occupation as well as the capability of the buildings to accommodate both organisational and technological changes. In addition the age of the buildings brings consequent increasing maintenance liabilities. Further the refurbishment of the London Road complex has been calculated to be only marginally less than the cost of a newly constructed bespoke building. Both a "do nothing" scenario and refurbishment of the London Road buildings have there been rejected.

2.5 The redevelopment of the existing London Road, Bracknell site has also been considered but is unlikely to achieve the requisite additional floorspace required for The Met. Office's future use given likely planning restrictions for the site. In addition the substantial costs of temporary off site accommodation during redevelopment are considered prohibitive. It is essential for The Met. Office that full operational capability is maintained through the transition period.

2.6 New accommodation is thus required to provide a modern efficient working environment fitting The Met. Office's standing as a world class weather and environmental service provider, to encourage modern good business practices including effectiveness and efficiency and be flexible to adapt to changing requirements. The advent of ever more sophisticated computer and telecommunications equipment in use by The Met. Office has further advanced the necessity of seeking new purpose built premises. There is a need to upgrade specialist computer facilities in early 2003 which requires new accommodation by the end of 2002.

2.7 The opportunity to relocate at Shinfield Park, presently the location of The Met. Office College, would provide the potential to build up relations with the adjacent European Centre for Medium Weather Forecasting (ECMWF) and strengthen ties with European partners. In addition existing links with the University of Reading where a number of staff work at the Joint Centre for Mesoscale Meteorology would also be strengthened. This would create a "centre of excellence" for meteorology and environmental sciences, since The Met. Office is a world leader in a number of areas including climate prediction research for the DETR and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

2.8 The Met. Office is also consulting with Bracknell Forest Borough Council under Circular 18/84 with regard to the construction of a similar headquarters building and parking deck at Beaufort Park, Nr. Bracknell. Following both consultations The Met. Office will consider their position with regard to relocation. At present a relocation away from the Reading-Bracknell area has not been considered in detail, nor have other non Met. Office owned sites in the locality been considered. A planning brief will be prepared in conjunction with Bracknell Forest Borough Council regarding the future use of the London Road, Bracknell site.

3.0 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND PROPOSALS

3.1 Shinfield Park is presently the home of The Met. Office Staff College where it provides training facilities and residential accommodation within a parkland and woodland setting. Historically it was an RAF Station and training school.

3.2 The site lies on an elevated plateau some 5.1 kilometres south of Reading town centre, and 1.7 kilometres east of junction 11 of the M4. It lies within the administrative area of Wokingham District in an identified urban area.

3.3 The overall site is 17.6 hectares in area and is bounded to the east by the Shinfield Road (A327); to the north by the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (ECMWF); to the west by woodland on the scarpslope and in the south by the Whitley Wood Lane (B3270) and the Foster Wheeler Building (formerly Shire Hall). The primary access to the site is from Whitley Wood Lane.

3.4 The existing site may conveniently be described with reference to a number of specific areas:

- The central core area: This contains a miscellany of single and two storey buildings of various ages including the main teaching and administrative area (Berkeley House), restaurant, new accommodation block, recreational areas and the Lodge, a Grade II late 18th century listed building. A number of these buildings have been adapted from their former RAF use. Others such as the restaurant and accommodation block are purpose built and of recent construction.

- The eastern area: This contains the two former accommodation blocks, North House and Stanmore House adjacent to Shinfield Road now respectively vacant, and used for limited teaching purposes.

- The former playing field: This is a level open area west of the main built up area with a tennis court to the south.

- The Woodland area: This western part of the site is identified as a wildlife heritage site.

- Access and car parking areas: This southern area provides the main access from the B3270 and includes the main site parking area.

- Theatre site: This is a former NAAFI building to the south of the site presently leased to the Shinfield Players.

3.5 A more detailed consideration of the site is contained in the Landscape Appraisal - Site Context and Appraisal.

Design Statement

3.6 As indicated on the illustrative drawings, the proposed new complex comprises approx 37,160 sq. metres (400,000 sq.ft) overall of accommodation to the south east corner of the site, including the existing Grade II lodge of 4.28 sq. metres (4,600 sq. ft) (which will be retained) and a replacement building for the present student residential accommodation provided at Alexandra House of 2,266 sq. metres (24,400 sq.ft approx). There are two main areas of additional new build, the main building providing office and ancillary teaching and computer operations accommodation of 33,351 sq. metres (359,000 sq.ft) and a social facilities building of 1,115 sq. metres (12,000 sq.ft). All other buildings presently on site with the exception of the listed building would be demolished to facilitate the new development.

3.7 The site is accessed from the south east via an enlarged roundabout on the junction of Whitley Wood Lane and Shinfield Road. Upon entering the site the entrance forecourt of the main building is immediately in view with its bus lay-by and drop off point. A link road to the west gives access to the social facilities building off Whitley Wood Road and the decked car park adjacent to Nores Hill Copse. An informal driveway west of the main building gives occasional access to Alexandra House to the north west off Shinfield Road and the Lodge to the north.

3.8 The entrance forecourt is semi enclosed by a stepped perimeter corner. A circular core tower marks each corner of the building aiding orientation, the largest marking the entrance forecourt and a quarter circle structurally glazed reception area.

3.9 The perimeter corners are created by four 3 storey 15m high (approx) pavilion buildings. Each pavilion contains a full height 12m wide internal street with a view at each end over a perimeter corner to the surrounding landscape. Each "street" has a translucent membrane roof over access galleries linked by bridges. Barrel vaulted office areas flank the internal street, each office area having a roof top plant area accessible by crane from the office ends to permit ease of plant replacement.

3.10 Each pavilion is linked on two corners by the core towers to create a central courtyard with a restaurant pod. Perimeter tensile membrane canopies, solar shading and a central feature canopy create a modern interpretation of the Oxbridge quadrangle.

3.11 The external office elevations are glazed between masonry piers. The piers are stepped at the top to receive the angled tubular steel roof supports. These stepped piers are most visible on the office ends where the feature roof trusses can also be seen. The internal street is expressed externally by structural glazing between the stepped piers of the offices. The core towers are clad in hi-tech cladding and are crowned by communication/feature masts.

3.12 The Operations Centre occupies the south west stepped perimeter corner and comprises a 3 storey secure isolated building, for uninterrupted continual operations, with an internal central dividing fire break and secure glazed link to the main building. The built form and aesthetic will act independently from the main built form visually expressing the contrasting internal "hi-tech" use.

3.13 The social facilities unit comprises a mainly double height single storey building accommodating social and sports facilities, a crèche and information centre. A separate car park for the social facilities building will be formed at the end of the existing track from Whitley Wood Lane to allow separate and secure controllable parking.

3.14 The primary parking area comprises a decked car park enclosure of 750 parking spaces. The decked layout up to 4.5 metres in height will utilise the natural slope and

landscaping of the existing site towards the western woodland area to reduce the overall height (3.5m approx) of the eastern elevation and its visual impact on the main building and operations wing. Such a parking area would be accessed from a 6 metre width road running south of the headquarters building.

3.15 The car park design will provide a modern, secure, open parking environment with high levels of natural ventilation and daylight. Surrounding external landscaping will be enhanced to minimise overall visual impact on the visually significant southern boundary of the site.

3.16 The new Alexandra House comprises a 2-storey building of student residential accommodation of a comparable height to the existing Alexandra House which will be removed. The overall built form and position will enable the building to be successfully sited adjacent to the existing northern woodland area creating an enhanced setting with links to the main office accommodation and lodge (conference) building.

3.17 The distribution of the buildings and the decked design of the car parking sits comfortably within the existing landscape maintaining the major areas of trees and woodland. In addition, a substantial area of open space north-west of the main building and the lawned setting of the Grade II lodge is maintained, with the present unsympathetic additions to the Lodge removed. The elevations of the main building, though using repetitive elements, are enlivened by the use of the curved office roofs and core towers, visible at the stepped perimeter corners, creating a lively roofscape.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Met. Office is an international organisation whose headquarters in the UK have been located in Bracknell since the early 1960's. The organisation has a well established presence in Bracknell and has contributed to the economy of the County for many years.

6.2 The organisation is presently based in a number of separate buildings within Bracknell Town Centre and at Shinfield Park and Beaufort Park. A decision has been taken to concentrate operations in a single new headquarters building.

6.3 The Met. Office is therefore seeking to consult in outline for a new headquarters complex 37,160 sq.m. under Department of the Environment Circular 18/84. To assist the local planning authority, illustrative proposals are provided to show the possible location and appearance of the proposed new building.

6.4 The current consultation therefore seeks to address the relocation needs of an existing Berkshire organisation on a site which already provides for the staff college. Whilst the current planning policy framework in Berkshire seeks to restrain new employment generating development, provision is made for the growth of local companies and organisations where such development would not have an adverse effect upon demands for additional housing or create transport problems.

6.5 In terms of pressure for additional housing, the proposal essentially represents a relocation of existing staff from Bracknell. However, with 2,500 new homes planned in Wokingham District just to the south of the M4 within easy travelling distance by public transport, cycle or foot of the Shinfield Park site, the proposed development would be well located relative to new housing should this arise in the longer term and offers the opportunity for travel by a range of modes.

6.6 Transport issues are dealt with in a separate report, which sets out the framework for a Green Transport Plan for the site. The report concludes that Shinfield Park is an appropriate site for the relocation of The Met. Office, in providing an opportunity to

implement national and local transport policies for the reduction in car use whilst providing local highway benefits.

6.7 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal has concluded that the proposed development has been sensitively designed and located to respect the existing landscape setting and to be assimilated into the local area without detriment to local amenities.

6.8 Overall therefore, although there may be a small increase in the travel to work pattern these are considered to be outweighed by the benefits to the economy of Berkshire of retaining and expanding an international organisation which has developed in Berkshire and now employs some 1,400 individuals.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1	-	Extracts from Berkshire Structure Plan 1991 - 2006
Appendix 2	-	Extracts from Loddon Area Local Plan 1995
Appendix 3	-	Extracts from Deposit Draft Wokingham District Local Plan 1997 and 1999 Amendments.

LIST OF DRAWINGS

Drawing No. 9906/P1	-	Site Location Plan
Drawing No. SK007B	-	Site/Building Footprint Layout
Drawing No. SK008	-	Typical Section and Elevation

WSP

12. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

12.1 The Met. Office currently employs approximately 1500 staff in eight buildings in the Bracknell area with a further establishment in Farnborough. They also have a College which is based in Shinfield Park to the south of Reading.

12.2 Due to its expansion over the years and the need to upgrade its computing capacity the Met. Office has established a need to relocate to a single purpose built complex. For practical and economic reasons it has considered sites within its control and identified Shinfield Park as a possible location.

12.3 Shinfield Park already contains some buildings associated with the Met. Office College and, with the exception of The Lodge, the buildings are generally of a low quality. The site is within a defined settlement, it is also next to the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts and near the University, this will assist in creating a centre of excellence for meteorology.

12.4 Being to the south of the Reading urban area the existing public transport provision adjacent to the site is limited to three bus routes. However, given the size and significance of Reading there are many public transport facilities in the wider area.

12.5 The road network around Shinfield Park is constrained by the M4, however the roads, and in particular the B3270, acts as a south east orbital route to Reading. As a result the area does suffer from congestion at peak times in particular around the A327 / B3270 roundabouts which are known as the Black Boy junction. In view of these conditions Berkshire County Council produced a proposal for improving the B3270 in the vicinity of Black Boy junction. This proposal has been retained by Wokingham District Council.

12.6 The A327 corridor through the Black Boy junction is also identified by Wokingham DC for a cycleway to Reading and as a 'green route'. There are also proposals for a study to consider the reallocation of road space to non car modes.

12.7 The Met. Office proposals will include approximately 29,283 m^2 of office accommodation, and 4,645m^2 for a computer operations centre. Replacement college facilities will also be provided.

12.8 The Met. Office fully supports central and local Government policies regarding transport and intend to provide parking in accordance with the current draft PPG13 proposals. This will result in 700 spaces for the office use. At the same time they will reduce the number of College parking spaces from 100 to 50.

12.9 With up to 1500 staff to be relocated from Bracknell it follows that non car modes of transport will need to be used by many of the employees.

12.10 From a staff survey and investigation of current public transport infrastructure it is possible to implement transport strategies that can provide the necessary facilities.

12.11 As the majority of staff live in the Bracknell and Wokingham areas it is sensible to concentrate the measures on these employees. Existing bus and train services can be used if they are supplemented by specific shuttle services operated by the Met. Office. Initially the preferred method of operation will be a shuttle bus from Winnersh Triangle to Shinfield Park. This service would intercept employees using the train and bus services from Bracknell and Wokingham and also any car drivers who decided to park in the Winnersh Triangle area.

12.12 The shuttle bus services would be integrated with other transport modes by the implementation of a Green Travel Plan (GTP). The GTP would co-ordinate all the transport modes and identify means of ensuring that alternative modes are attractive and used.

12.13 Despite the restriction of parking spaces on the site and the implementation of a GTP there will be some car generation on the local road network. An estimate has been made of the flows generated by the development and the impact on the local road network has been considered.

12.14 The proposals for the site include a revised roundabout access from the northern Black Boy junction. With the additional Met. Office flows it can be shown that there is no detrimental traffic impact with the new roundabout. However at the southern roundabout it is not possible to provide an improved roundabout without using land allocated by Berkshire County Council for improvements to the B3270.

12.15 The principle of improvements to the B3270 has been retained by Wokingham DC and there is approximately £1M available for these works from other developers. These highway works have been included in an analysis with the Met. Office proposals and it can be shown that the Met. Office traffic can be accommodated whilst also providing a benefit to the general highway network.

12.16 If follows that the Met. Office traffic could be accommodated by the construction of the northern Black Boy roundabout and by a contribution to Wokingham DC for their proposed link road scheme.

12.17 In conclusion, Shinfield Park is an appropriate site for the relocation of the Met. Office. It provides the opportunity of implementing current national and local Government transport policies for the reduction in car use whilst providing some local highway benefits.

Angela Odell

From: Angela Odell
Sent: 12 June 2000 08:10
To: Jane Earl; Karen Satterford
Cc: John R Mitchell
Subject: Met Office, Shinfield

Dear Jane and Karen

Under DoE Circular 18/84 we have received the application from the Met. Office for 37,160 sq.m floorspace, including 3 storey 33,351 sq.m. office block with ancillary teaching and computer accommodation. (The rest is student accommodation and social facilities).

If you wish to discuss/would like any further information, please ask me.

Angela Odell (Case Officer)

Angela Odell

From: Angela Odell
Sent: 12 June 2000 07:56
To: Liz Gibbons
Cc: Jim Dunning
Subject: Met Office, Shiinfield

Importance: High

Dear Liz

I have received the application for 37,160 sq.m including 33,351 sq.m office and ancillary teaching and computer operations block under under Dept. of Environment Circular 18/84 - the rest is social and student accommodation. Should I advertise the application as contrary to development plan?

Thanks

Angi

Angela Odell

From: Jane Earl
Sent: 12 June 2000 11:26
To: Angela Odell; Karen Satterford
Cc: John R Mitchell; Helen Gates
Subject: RE: Met Office, Shinfield

could we have abrief conversation about this, please. I will ask helen toiarrange

jane

-----Original Message-----
From: Angela Odell
Sent: 12 June 2000 08:10
To: Jane Earl; Karen Satterford
Cc: John R Mitchell
Subject: Met Office, Shinfield

Dear Jane and Karen

Under DoE Circular 18/84 we have received the application from the Met. Office for 37,160 sq.m floorspace, including 3 storey 33,351 sq.m. office block with ancillary teaching and computer accommodation. (The rest is student accommodation and social facilities).

If you wish to discuss/would like any further information, please ask me.

Angela Odell (Case Officer)

John

Lib dems also to go to Met Office?

Babtie Environmental

School Green
Shinfield
Reading
Berkshire RG2 9HL
Tel 0118 988 1555
Fax 0118 988 1666

Babtie

A member of Babtie Group

Our ref PF

17 July 2000

Angela Odell
Wokingham District Council
Planning Services
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1WR

PLANNING SERVICES | HPT 31904
Your ref | TLS
DC | ENF
APP |
CS |
18 JUL 2000
COPIES TO: | ACK:
FILE:

Dear Angela

SHINFIELD PARK MET OFFICE RELOCATION

I thank you for the plans you sent this morning. I have checked this location out against the Wokingham Sites and Monuments Record and there are no archaeological sites. As the development is on a plot of land already substantially disturbed, I cannot see there are grounds for any requests for archaeological works on the site.

Yours sincerely

P FASHAM
Principal Archaeologist

Group Offices:
Aberdeen
Abingdon
Aylesbury
Bedford
Belfast
Birmingham
Bristol
Cambridge
Cardiff
Chelmsford
Coventry
Croydon
Derby
Edinburgh
Exeter
Glasgow
Inverness
Ipswich
London
Maidstone
Newcastle upon Tyne
Oxford
Preston
Reading
Shrewsbury
Wakefield
Wallingford
Westminster

Ankara
Bangkok
Hong Kong
Jakarta
Kuala Lumpur
Manila
Prague
Singapore

Babtie Group Ltd
Registered Office:
95 Bothwell Street
Glasgow G2 7HX
Registered in Scotland
No: 141100

INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Registered Environmental Impact Assessor

S8291

Recycled Paper

Tel. 0118 9746003 (Direct Line)
Fax. 0118 9790877
Email. Jane.Earl@wokingham.gov.uk

Date. 29 June, 2000

My ref. CE/hkg/3/1

Your ref.

PLAN
POL
DC
APP
CS
03 JUL 2000
COPIES TO:
ACK:
FILE: O/2000/0714

Chief Executive's Office
P.O. Box 150
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WQ
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 979 0877
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Mr Peter Ewins
Chief Executive
The Met Office
London road
BRACKNELL
RG12 2SZ

Dear Peter,

Just a brief note to thank you for the time that you and your colleagues gave to briefing members and officers from Wokingham and from Shinfield Parish Council. I think all of the Members who attended found it extremely informative, and I hope that it has helped build some understanding of the issues which are facing you as an organisation.

Your suggestion of a visit to Shinfield Park to look at the site on the ground was well received, and I would be grateful if your office could make contact with John Mitchell, Head of Development Control, to agree some suitable dates, at which point we will circulate them to those Members from here and from Shinfield Parish Council who might like to attend.

Many thanks for all your work.

Yours sincerely

Jane Earl
Chief Executive

c.c. John Mitchell

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

From: Tom Callaghan, Highways

To: Angela Odell, Planning

My Ref: P14 –1714

Your Ref: O/2000/1714

Date: 29th August 2000

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION F/2000/1714
PROPOSED ERECTION OF HEADQUARTERS AND ANCILLARY BUILDINGS FOR USE BY METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE AT SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD.
APPLICATION BY MOD UNDER CIRCULAR 18/84.

Overview

It is acknowledged by both the Highway Authority and the Applicant that the highway network in the vicinity of this site is inadequate in its current layout to accommodate the likely level of additional traffic that will be generated by this development. However, the applicant proposes major highway infrastructure improvements along with a Green Travel Plan to mitigate the development traffic to a level whereby nil detriment will be caused, with additional benefits to peak hour congestion. Although a number of issues are yet to be resolved, the Highway Authority can confirm at this stage that the principle of development can be accepted subject to further detailed assessment and consideration of the necessary infrastructure improvements to both the highway network and public transport to make the development acceptable. It is intended that once these outstanding issues are finalised they will be reported back to the next available Committee for consideration.

Main Body of report

The site is located at the intersection of two Distributor roads, the A327 which forms part of the Primary Distributor Road network and is defined as a 'road of more than local importance' within the Berkshire Structure Plan, and the B3270 Earley Outer peripheral Road (EOPR). It is accepted by both the applicant and the Highway Authority that during peak periods the existing mini roundabout junctions connecting the A327 with the EOPR are operating over capacity and results in extensive queuing and delays, particularly during the morning peak period. These queues can extend a considerable length with northbound queues on the A327 regularly extending south beyond the roundabout junction with Hyde End Road. Access to the development is proposed by the introduction of a fourth arm to the northern most roundabout and considerably increasin its size.

The Transport Assessment (TA) submitted in support of the proposal identifies that the net increase of additional vehicle trips on the network as a result of the development will be 570 (two way) during the morning period and 394 (two way) during the evening peak. In terms of the distribution of this traffic, the TA assumes that during the morning peak 75% of this traffic will be travelling from the east along the EOPR, 7.9% from the south along the A327, 14% travelling from the north along the A327 and 3% from Whitley Wood Lane. Whilst the majority of the additional traffic will impact on the EOPR, this will clearly have an adverse affect on some of the existing links to the two roundabouts, in particular the northbound queue along the A327.

In order to mitigate this additional traffic, the applicant proposes 2 options for major junction improvements. Option 1 involves simply enlarging both roundabouts, whereas Option 2 proposes enlarging both roundabouts and providing a link road which in effect extends the EOPR to link up with Whitley Wood Lane. The modelling exercise carried out, shows that option 2 will offer most benefit overall. It is however important that the Authority does not commit at this stage to any scheme until all options have been considered fully, but accept in principle improvements can be carried out as part of the development that would mitigate the impact of the development traffic.

The proportion of on site car parking proposed does not appear to differ significantly from the existing demand as it represents approximately 50% provision for staff. In the context of guidance within the draft PPG13, new development should not be designed to accommodate existing parking demand but seek to reduce the availability of parking so as to encourage means of travel other than by private car. It is considered that on site parking should be used more as a demand management tool whereby car parking provision should be gradually reduced in line with targets and aims of a Green Trave Plan.

Pedestrian/cycleway access is to form an integral part of this development. Although the applicant proposes a Toucan crossing on the A327 to the west of the site, there are still a number of outstanding issues relating to improving pedestrian/cycle access, in particular, the possibility of upgrading the existing footpaths links running through the site for shared use for cycleways. This would provide good links to the residential areas to the north west of the site. The applicant has identified proposals for new/improved cycleways as contained within Local Transport Plan and Reading Urban Area Package, but has offered no financial contributions to bring these schemes forward. Discussions are continuing with the applicant on this issue, however good accessibility by foot and bike are considered to be a fundamental part of this proposal

Improved public transport in the form of a shuttle bus linking the site to the local stations is also proposed. Whilst this is welcomed, there is concern as to whether the anticipated modal shift/patronage is realistic. There is also a concern that improvements to public transport should not be exclusively for Met Office employees and that improved public transport facilities should be integrated within the existing services that are currently available. Discussions are still continuing with the applicant on these issues.

The GTP proposed by the Met Office is also welcomed although targets and more measures of restraint, including possible staged reduction in car parking as the GTP develops should be included. These issues can be agreed at a later stage.

The internal arrangement of the site is not an issue at this stage, as I understand the detailed scheme may alter significantly t that shown on the drawings. In any event, there is sufficient land within the site to ensure adequate access roads/turning facilities for all vehicles including and public transport/delivery/service vehicles

It is recommended that no objection be raised in relation to traffic and transportation matters but that the development shoul not proceed until such time as the further detailed assessments have been carried out and an appropriate package of measure to mitigate the impact of the development traffic, including improvements to public transport have been agreed and endorse by the Development Control Committee.

Many thanks

Tom Callaghan.

Planning & Transportation

Director of Planning & Transportation : George Kingston MA (Oxon) DipTP MRTPI
Borough Planning Officer : Mike Holmes BSc (Econ) DipTP MRTPI

This matter is being dealt with by: Nicky Linihan-Mardon Tel: 01344 351180

PLANNING SERVICES | APP 32863
DC | ENF
APP |
CS |
10 AUG 2000
COPIES TO: | ACK:
FILE:

BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL

Time Square
Market Street
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG12 1JD
☎ 01344 424642
Fax 01344 351104
DX 33611 Bracknell
Minicom 01344 352045
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Our Ref: DC/6/3
Your Ref: Angela Odell 0/2000/1714

Environmental Services department,
Planning Services,
P.O. Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berkshire. RG40 1WR
F.A.O. Mrs. Angela Odell

7 August 2000

Dear Sirs,

Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield. Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

I refer to your letter of 20 June 2000 regarding the above and would thank you for the opportunity to comment.

In considering the proposals I would make the following observations:

- Careful consideration will need to be given to the strategic employment issues relating to the proposal, with regard being paid to Policy BU1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991 – 2006 and in particular the elements relating to additional housing pressure and transportation issues.

- It is noted that the Transport Assessment submitted in support of the proposals does not give any detailed consideration to the potential impacts on the highway network within the eastern Wokingham and western Bracknell areas. The Assessment provides information on the residential locations of staff currently working for the Meteorological Office. A significant proportion of these live within Bracknell Forest Borough to the south of the town centre. Changes on local commuting patterns with respect to car borne journeys are likely to have some impact on the local highway network in the above mentioned area during peak hours. This is of particular relevance bearing in mind the close proximity to the proposed housing allocation in the emerging Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan at Peacock Farm. In order to limit any impact it is vital that a Company Travel Plan is developed and implemented on first occupation, should the development take place, and that suitable monitoring is carried out. The Borough Council would welcome the opportunity for input into the development of such a plan.

I hope this is of assistance. If you wish to discuss this matter further then please do not hesitate to contact my colleague Nicky Linihan-Mardon on 01344 351180.

Yours sincerely



for **Mike Holmes**
Borough Planning Officer

Angi

Reading BOROUGH COUNCIL

PL... VICES	RT
POL	TLS
...	ENF
...P	
CS	33440
24 AUG 2000	
COPIES TO: Ao	ACK:
	FILE:

Tony Lear
Director of Environment
Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 7TD
☎ 0118 939 0900
DX 40124 Reading (Castle Street)
Fax: 0118 958 9770
Minicom 𝒟 0118 939 0700

Our Ref: 00/00738/WOKADJ/AD

Mr J Mitchell (Development Control Manager)
Wokingham District Council
Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham RG40 1WR

Direct: ☎ 0118 9390023

22 August 2000

Your contact is: **Andrew Dawe – Senior Planning Officer**

Dear Mr Mitchell

RE: Meteorological Office training college, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Reading. Proposal: Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as Meteorological Office (your ref. Angela Odell/O/2000/1714).

I refer to your letter dated 20th June 2000 consulting Reading Borough Council on the above planning application.

The proposal was considered by our Planning Applications Committee on 16th August 2000. The decision was taken to raises a holding objection to the proposal until the following issues have been adequately addressed: the applicant needs to demonstrate that a comprehensive assessment of suitable alternative sites closer to urban centres has been undertaken in accordance with the sequential approach; that appropriate measures, works and contributions have been agreed and secured by a tripartite legal agreement (WDC, RBC & Met. Office) to help achieve a balanced approach to transport matters in accordance with Policies LD5 and BU1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan and the Reading Urban Area Package; and a Green Travel Plan has been submitted to and has been agreed by Wokingham District Council in consultation with Reading Borough Council in accordance with Draft Revision PPG13 (appropriate measures, incentives, targets and reviews to be secured through a tripartite legal agreement with WDC, RBC & Met. Office). If these issues are not adequately addressed the Council believes that the proposal would be contrary to policies LD1 (Sustainable Development), BU1 (Assessment of Proposals for Further Business, Industrial, Distribution and Storage Development), T1 (Integrated Approach to Transport), T2 (Provision for Pedestrians), T3 (Provision for Cyclists), T6 (Control of On-Street and Off-Street Parking) of the Berkshire Structure Plan.

In the event that the Meteorological Office choose to relocate to Beaufort Park near Bracknell or elsewhere (including relocation of the Meteorological Office training college from Shinfield Park),

the Council would strongly urge Wokingham District Council to allocate the existing Shinfield Road site for housing at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with the objectives of PPG3 and the adopted Structure Plan.

In the event that the proposal is agreed by WDC and in the event that WDC and the applicants agree to enter into the legal agreement set out above, then it was agreed that officers of Reading Borough Council should enter into the legal agreement set out above to secure the appropriate transport measures, works and contributions and to secure a Green Travel Plan.

I have enclosed a copy of the report to the Planning Applications Committee for your information.

Yours sincerely

David Breeze
Planning Manager - Implementation

COMMITTEE REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL **ITEM NO.**

WARD: Wokingham District Council (WA)

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 16 August 2000

00/00738/WOKADJ/AD Meteorological Office training college, Shinfield Road

Notice of proposed development under Circular 18/84 for the erection of a headquarters building for the Meteorological Office (consultation from Wokingham District Council).

1. INTRODUCTION

The site is located at the southern end of Shinfield Road immediately to the south of the European Weather Centre at the junction with Whitley Wood Lane and north-east of Shinfield Park (formerly Shire Hall). The Meteorological Office training college currently occupy the site which comprises several mainly single storey buildings and a listed building and a large area of open space to the west of the buildings. Access to the site is currently from Whitley Wood Lane.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

None available.

3. PROPOSAL

Erection of a purpose built headquarters building for the Meteorological Office incorporating the existing training college together with a student accommodation block, social facilities building and associated decked parking. The development would comprise approximately 37,160 sqm of accommodation including the grade II listed building. This would therefore involve relocation from the Bracknell offices. The Meteorological Office are considering either this site or a site at Beaufort Park near Bracknell as locations for this relocation.

4.CONSULTATIONS

This is a consultation from Wokingham District Council who have carried out all the necessary consultations of surrounding residents.

The Joint Strategic Planning Committee have made the following draft comments from a strategic point of view:

- The location within an urban area and on a largely brownfield site with the potential for good access by non-car modes means that the proposal accords with Structure Plan Policies OS1 and LD1. However, there is no evidence that a sequential test has been carried out as required by PPG6. Only sites already owned by the applicant appear to have been examined as options for the proposed relocation (this site and Beaufort Park, Bracknell). PPG6 requires a much wider assessment to be undertaken. In this case a search for sites within the urban areas of Bracknell (including Amen Corner), Reading, Wokingham, Camberley and possibly Maidenhead would seem appropriate.
- As a development to meet the needs of an existing "firm" in Berkshire it accords with the criteria in the first part of Structure Plan Policy BU1. On the assumption that the scheme is a straight relocation and involves no increase in staff across the Met Office's sites in Berkshire, then the second part of the policy, which seeks to ensure that extra housing and transport pressures are not

created, would also be satisfied. Although there would be some transport pressures in the short term, with staff having longer journeys to work, this is likely to settle down over time.

- A number of points in the Transport Assessment (TA) require further analysis or justification. Strategic matters are as follows. Given the large scale and potential impact of the development, the principles of a Green Travel Plan should be firmly established before any decision is taken to proceed with the development. Provision for pedestrians and cyclists will need to be made in the design of the junctions, and a cycle route along Shinfield Road should be secured in advance of the development to satisfy Structure Plan Policies T2 and T3. It will be essential for any transport proposals to be fully integrated with the Reading Urban Area Package and other developments in the local area. For instance, it may be advantageous to coordinate transport proposals such as shuttle buses with those for Foster Wheeler and the current application for development at the former Shire Hall.

5. TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS

A travel survey of existing staff travel highlights that the majority of the staff live in clusters in Wokingham & Bracknell and an average of 53% currently travel to/from work by car. It is unlikely that the majority of the existing staff would change their residence as a result of any relocation. However, certain assumptions have been made in the submissions that in the longer term, any new housing development coming forward south of the M4 motorway would be well located in offering the choice of travel by a range of modes to Shinfield Park. Such statements now seem somewhat premature given the recent Wokingham Local Plan Inquiry decision.

In any event, the traffic impact on Junction 11 itself and the approach roads leading thereto is likely to be quite low. This in view of the fact that most of the car-borne traffic would be travelling from Bracknell and Wokingham. However, some congestion does occur on the roads in the immediate vicinity of the site (mainly within Wokingham). Any improvements to the transport network (considered necessary as a result of the development) including the Shinfield Road corridor (in Reading) must accord with schemes coming forward through the Reading Urban Area Package (RUAP). There may be scope for contributions to be secured towards the RUAP.

A Green Travel Plan (GTP) framework is included in the Transport Assessment and this would provide a good basis for the GTP. However, as the end user and existing travel patterns are known a GTP should have been produced at this stage. Since journeys to and from work for this site would impact on the transport network in Reading, this Council should be a party to the measures, incentives and targets to be included in a GTP. On-site car parking provision represents 50% provision for staff which is very similar to the existing demand and equates to a standard of 1:50. There may be scope to further reduce car parking provision through targets set in the GTP. Essentially a range of options for car-share and alternative travel modes should be in place from day one of any relocation.

A holding objection should be raised through the Wokingham District Council on transport grounds until such times as:

- Appropriate measures, works and contributions have been agreed and secured by a tripartite legal agreement (WDC, RBC & Met. Office) to help achieve a balanced approach to transport matters in accordance with Policies LD5 and BU1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan.
- A Green Travel Plan has been submitted to and has been agreed by Wokingham District Council in consultation with Reading Borough Council in accordance with Draft PPG13. Appropriate measures, incentives, targets and reviews to be secured through a tripartite legal agreement (WDC, RBC & Met. Office). Essentially the GTP shall comply with the good practice guide issued by the Government's Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme in March 2000.

6. ACCESS IMPLICATIONS
The proposal is only being considered in outline form at this stage and so there are no specific design details. However, conditions should be recommended concerning wheelchair access.

7. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS
The proposal would be redeveloping an existing site within the urban area and therefore would make better use of previously developed land. However, the significant intensification in the use of the site raises concerns about achieving a choice of transport provision and availability of sufficient housing in the longer term in the Reading area.

8. APPRAISAL
In terms of the issues specifically affecting Reading Borough, I consider them to be two fold. Firstly there are the implications for transport provision and secondly there is the impact that such a large development, employing 1502 staff (1419 and 58 relocated from Bracknell and Farnborough respectively and 25 remaining on this college site), might have in terms of housing supply and demand in Reading. The relevant policies of the Berkshire Structure Plan (BSP) are therefore as follows: LD1 (Sustainable Development), BU1 (Assessment of Proposals for Further Business, Industrial, Distribution and Storage Development), T1 (Integrated Approach to Transport), T2 (Provision for Pedestrians), T3 (Provision for Cyclists), T6 (Control of On-Street and Off-Street Parking).

Whilst the proposal represents a relocation of staff from an existing office in Bracknell, there are nevertheless issues raised about the sustainability of staff travelling to the new location which appears to be less accessible by public transport than the existing Bracknell site. In the longer term, the proposal raises the issue of the likely additional pressure such a large development would put on housing supply in the Reading area. Furthermore, whilst the proposal would be expanding/extending the existing use of the site, it is not just a small addition, but represents a major intensification bringing in approximately 1477 additional employees to the area. The existing buildings on the site occupy approximately 7,400 sqm of floorspace compared to the proposed floor area of 37,160 sqm.

From a transport point of view there are concerns as highlighted under 'Transport Implications' above which need to be addressed. Primarily, there would need to be an agreement of appropriate measures, works and contributions to help achieve a balanced approach to transport matters and a Green Travel Plan needs to be agreed. It is not an ideal location from the point of view of accessibility by alternative modes of transport and the applicant should demonstrate that a sequential approach has been carried out to determine whether there are more suitable sites available in or close to urban centres.

In terms of housing supply, the applicant's supporting statement points to Policy BU1 of the Structure Plan. The statement acknowledges the demand for housing in Reading and the resultant presumption against additional unallocated additional employment development where this is likely to significantly impact on housing demand. The applicant's argument in this respect is mainly based around a presumption that there will be a large new housing development south of the M4. However, proposals for such a development have recently been rejected by the Wokingham Local Plan Inspector. Whilst in the short term employees are likely to commute from the Bracknell area, in the longer term it is likely that some employees, particularly new staff, will want to live in or near to Reading. Whilst the Joint Strategic Planning Unit consider that in Berkshire as a whole there would not be any net increase in demand for housing arising from this development, on a local scale there will, in my opinion be implications for housing demand and supply although any impact is likely to be spread out over a longer period of time than would be the case for a new employer coming into the Berkshire area. Notwithstanding this local pressure, it is crucial that the redevelopment of the existing Meteorological Office site in Bracknell should involve a significant element of housing to

address the housing shortage in the wider area and to accord with Planning Policy Guidance note 3 (PPG3).

The proposed decked car parking would encroach onto the grassed area to the west of the existing developed part of the site. The car park would also be close to an area of ancient woodland but would not affect this. The open space is not visible from the surrounding residential area or roads and as such the proposed car park will not affect local amenities.

9. RECOMMENDATION

That Wokingham District Council (WDC) be informed that the Committee raises a holding objection to the proposal until the following issues have been adequately addressed: the applicant needs to demonstrate that a comprehensive assessment of suitable alternative sites closer to urban centres has been undertaken in accordance with the sequential approach; that appropriate measures, works and contributions have been agreed and secured by a tripartite legal agreement (WDC, RBC & Met. Office) to help achieve a balanced approach to transport matters in accordance with Policies LD5 and BU1 of the Berkshire Structure Plan and the Reading Urban Area Package; and a Green Travel Plan has been submitted to and has been agreed by Wokingham District Council in consultation with Reading Borough Council in accordance with Draft Revision PPG13 (appropriate measures, incentives, targets and reviews to be secured through a tripartite legal agreement with WDC, RBC & Met. Office). If these issues are not adequately addressed the Council believes that the proposal would be contrary to policies LD1 (Sustainable Development), BU1 (Assessment of Proposals for Further Business, Industrial, Distribution and Storage Development), T1 (Integrated Approach to Transport), T2 (Provision for Pedestrians), T3 (Provision for Cyclists), T6 (Control of On-Street and Off-Street Parking) of the Berkshire Structure Plan.

In the event that the Meteorological Office choose to relocate to Beaufort Park near Bracknell or elsewhere (including relocation of the Meteorological Office training college from Shinfield Park), the Council would strongly urge Wokingham District Council to allocate the existing Shinfield Road site for housing at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with the objectives of PPG3 and the adopted Structure Plan.

In the event that the proposal is agreed by WDC and in the event that WDC and the applicants agree to enter into the legal agreement set out above, then DELEGATE to officers to enter into the legal agreement set out above to secure the appropriate transport measures, works and contributions and to secure a Green Travel Plan.

Andrew Dawe

Angela Odell
From: Andy Glencross
Sent: 10 July 2000 11:42
To: Angela Odell
Subject: Met Office Planning Application O/2000/1714

Hi Angela

Thanks for sending me the Ecological Appraisal for the above. My views are as follows : -

* I broadly endorse the ecological appraisal(EA).
* It should supersede the tree survey with regard to the Veteran Trees and their management. Especially the realignment of the road to save one of the trees.
* The EA states that the species rich grassland will be unaffected by the development. However my reading of the drawings indicates that the proposed car park would in fringe on this habitat, and this needs to be clarified.
* It should be stated that the re-introduction of coppice management would benefit both dormice and the ancient woodland flora. This is implied within the report but not clearly stated.
* I would like to see some form of agreement (Section 106?) to ensure the benefits outlined are achieved in the future.

I hope this is of help to you.

Cheers

Andy Glencross

Tel. 0118 974 6445 (Direct Line)
E-mail: Angela.Odell@wokingham.gov.uk
Date. 17 July, 2000
My ref. AO/O/2000/1714

Clerk to Shinfield Parish Council

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 977 8909
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Mrs Barnes

APPLICATION O/2000/1714 – MET OFFICE AT SHINFIELD PARK

Thank you for your letter of 15 July. I note your concern that you thought that the item considered by the Development Control Committee on 28 of June was for determination of the application (of the observations to be forwarded as the application is a Circular 18/84 consultation). However, this was not so. The item was for information/initial discussion only. The application will be considered again by the Development Control Committee for determination of the observations to be forwarded. Your comments will be reported in the usual way in the agenda report for this.

I am sorry if you felt you had inadequate time to respond. If you wish to add to or modify your comments in any way, we can accept these before the relevant Committee meeting. If you wish to do this, please contact me to check which Committee the application is likely to be reported to.

Meanwhile, if you wish to discuss the matter further please contact me. I look forward to seeing some of the parish members at the site meeting on Thursday.

Yours sincerely

Ao.

MRS A ODELL
Senior Planner

The Berkshire Unitary Authorities'

JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING UNIT

St. Mary's House, c/o Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead SL6 1RF
Tel. 01628 796749 Fax. 01628 796739

Head of Strategic Planning and Transport: Stuart Hylton

PLANNING SERVICES REF 32720
TLS
POL
DC
APP
CS
COPIES TO:
ACK:
FILE:

Please ask for: Phil Gill
Direct Line: 01628 796518
Email: phillip.gill@rbwm.gov.uk
Our Ref: M/3/6
Your Ref: O/2000/1714

Angela Odell,
Planning Services,
Wokingham District Council,
PO Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
RG40 1WR.

4 August, 2000

Dear Angela,

Proposed Met Office Relocation to Shinfield Park

Thank you for consulting the Joint Unit on this proposal. I note that it is a consultation under Circular 18/84 and therefore not legally a planning application. For this reason I am not phrasing this letter in the normal form of object/not object; rather I am merely commenting on the issues raised and their relationship to strategic planning policy.

These comments have now been approved by the Chairman and Vice chairmen of the Joint Committee. Please ensure that these comments are passed on to the relevant Secretary of State.

Location

The location within an urban area and on a largely brownfield site with the potential for good access by non-car modes means that the proposal accords with Structure Plan Policies OS1 and LD1. However, I have seen no evidence that a sequential test has been carried out as required by PPG6 (paragraph 1.15). Only sites already owned by the applicant appear to have been examined as options for the proposed relocation (this site and Beaufort Park, Bracknell). PPG6 requires a much wider assessment to be undertaken. In this case a search for sites within the urban areas of Bracknell (including Amen Corner), Reading, Wokingham, Camberley and possibly Maidenhead would seem appropriate.

It is also important to note that permission should not be granted for development on both of the proposed sites. This would give tacit approval to the principle of commercial development on whichever site was not taken forward for the Met Office relocation. Certainly in the case of Beaufort Park this would be inappropriate.

Employment

The new Met Office building in itself would appear to accord with Policy BU1. As a development to meet the needs of an existing "firm" in Berkshire it accords with the criteria in the first part of the policy. On the assumption that the scheme is a straight relocation and involves no increase in staff across the Met Office's sites in Berkshire, then the second part of the policy, which seeks to ensure that extra housing and transport pressures are not created, would also be satisfied. Although there would be some transport pressures in the short term, with staff having longer journeys to work, this is likely to settle down over time.

My concern is with the future use of the site the Met Office plan to vacate in London Road, Bracknell. The above reasoning on BU1 will only be correct if there is no significant employment development on the London Road site once the relocation takes place. I understand that Bracknell Forest Borough Council is currently preparing a development brief for the London Road site, and I am hopeful that this will reflect the employment issues. I appreciate that this is outside of your Council's control, but it is a crucial issue which must be considered by the decision maker in this case, whom I understand to be the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Transport

A number of points in the Transport Assessment (TA) require further analysis or justification. Strategic matters are as follows.

The agents have agreed the principle of providing a Green Travel Plan, and this is welcomed. Given the large scale and potential impact of the development, the principles of such a Plan should be firmly established before any decision is taken to proceed with the development. In particular, staff surveys to establish travel needs and preferences will need to be carried out before the move. The Plan would benefit from incentives for staff to relinquish a parking space and from a commitment to the provision of real time public transport information, and should also contain a commitment to limit the number of car journeys to and from the site. Until the Plan is secured by legal agreement the proposal will conflict with Policy T1.

Provision for pedestrians and cyclists will need to be made in the design of the junctions, and a cycle route along Shinfield Road should be secured in advance of the development to satisfy Policies T2 and T3.

The TA appears to have overestimated the number of staff who would readily switch from car use to more sustainable modes. As a result there is insufficient attention given to parking management (on and off site), contrary to Policy T6. To comply with this policy there would need to be an indication as to what parking restrictions were to be imposed locally.

It will be essential for any transport proposals to be fully integrated with the Reading Urban Area Package and other developments in the local area. For instance, it may be advantageous to coordinate transport proposals such as shuttle buses with those for Foster Wheeler and the current application for development at the former Shire Hall.

I trust the above will be useful to you. I will be responding separately to Bracknell Forest Borough Council on the companion proposal to this one (relocation to Beaufort Park, Bracknell).

Yours sincerely,

P.A. Gill

Phillip Gill
Senior Planner

cc Martin Bourne, BFBC
Andrew Dawe, RBC

Angela Odell

PLANNING SERVICES | HPT 32451
POL | LS
DC AO | ENF
APP
CS
31 JUL 2000
COPIES TO: | ACK:
FILE:

The Berkshire Unitary Authorities'

JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING UNIT

St. Mary's House, c/o Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead SL6 1RF
Tel. 01628 796749 Fax. 01628 796739

Head of Strategic Planning and Transport: Stuart Hylton

Please ask for: Phil Gill
Direct Line: 01628 796518
Email: phillip.gill@rbwm.gov.uk
Our Ref: M/3/6
Your Ref: O/2000/1714

Angela Odell,
Planning Services,
Wokingham District Council,
PO Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
RG40 1WR.

26 July, 2000

Dear Angela,

Proposed Met Office Relocation to Shinfield Park

Thank you for consulting the Joint Unit on this proposal. I note that it is a consultation under Circular 18/84 and therefore not legally a planning application. For this reason I am not phrasing this letter in the normal form of object/not object; rather I am merely commenting on the issues raised and their relationship to strategic planning policy. Please ensure that these comments are passed on to the relevant Secretary of State.

Please note that at this stage these are draft comments, and have yet to be approved by the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Joint Committee. I will let you know when I have heard from them.

Location

The location within an urban area and on a largely brownfield site with the potential for good access by non-car modes means that the proposal accords with Structure Plan Policies OS1 and LD1. However, I have seen no evidence that a sequential test has been carried out as required by PPG6 (paragraph 1.15). Only sites already owned by the applicant appear to have been examined as options for the proposed relocation (this site and Beaufort Park, Bracknell). PPG6 requires a much wider assessment to be undertaken. In this case a search for sites within the urban areas of Bracknell (including Amen Corner), Reading, Wokingham, Camberley and possibly Maidenhead would seem appropriate.

Employment

The new Met Office building in itself would appear to accord with Policy BU1. As a development to meet the needs of an existing "firm" in Berkshire it accords with the criteria in the first part of the policy. On the assumption that the scheme is a straight relocation and involves no increase in staff across the

Met Office's sites in Berkshire, then the second part of the policy, which seeks to ensure that extra housing and transport pressures are not created, would also be satisfied. Although there would be some transport pressures in the short term, with staff having longer journeys to work, this is likely to settle down over time.

My concern is with the future use of the site the Met Office plan to vacate in London Road, Bracknell. The above reasoning on BU1 will only be correct if there is no significant employment development on the London Road site once the relocation takes place. I understand that Bracknell Forest Borough Council is currently preparing a development brief for the London Road site, and I am hopeful that this will reflect the employment issues. I appreciate that this is outside of your Council's control, but it is a crucial issue which must be considered by the decision maker in this case, whom I understand to be the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Transport

A number of points in the Transport Assessment (TA) require further analysis or justification. Strategic matters are as follows.

The agents have agreed the principle of providing a Green Travel Plan, and this is welcomed. Given the large scale and potential impact of the development, the principles of such a Plan should be firmly established before any decision is taken to proceed with the development. In particular, staff surveys to establish travel needs and preferences will need to be carried out before the move. The Plan would benefit from incentives for staff to relinquish a parking space. Until the Plan is secured by legal agreement the proposal will conflict with Policy T1.

Provision for pedestrians and cyclists will need to be made in the design of the junctions, and a cycle route along Shinfield Road should be secured in advance of the development to satisfy Policies T2 and T3.

The TA appears to have overestimated the number of staff who would readily switch from car use to more sustainable modes. As a result there is insufficient attention given to parking management (on and off site), contrary to Policy T6.

It will be essential for any transport proposals to be fully integrated with the Reading Urban Area Package and other developments in the local area. For instance, it may be advantageous to coordinate transport proposals such as shuttle buses with those for Foster Wheeler and the current application for development at the former Shire Hall.

I trust the above will be useful to you. I will be responding separately to Bracknell Forest Borough Council on the companion proposal to this one (relocation to Beaufort Park, Bracknell).

Yours sincerely,

P.A Gill

Phillip Gill
Senior Planner

cc Martin Bourne, BFBC

Shinfield
Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs. J Barnes, 36 Ryhill Way, Earley, Reading, Berkshire. RG6 4AZ
Tel/Fax: 0118 9547115

15th July 2000

Mrs A Odell
Case Officer
Wokingham District Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire

Dear Mrs Odell

Application No: 0/2000/1714 – Outline Proposals for Met Office facilities at Shinfield Park.

At the meeting of our Planning and Transportation committee on 5th July, it was resolved to record the comments below in respect of the above outline application in our parish. The proposals contained therein do not appear in the District's Local Plan but will have a major impact on our community and environment, and it is upon these impacts that we have concentrated our comments. However, we deplore the fact that we have been given only days to comment on a four volume submission. We must also record our grave concern that the application went before a Development Control Sub-Committee on 28th June, prior to our comments being called for by 14th July. For that determining committee not to have the local council comments before them, prior to making a decision on such a major development is unacceptable.

1) **Introductory Remarks** – Whilst recognising the applicant as a first class Globally acclaimed organisation that would bring prestige to the area with support from many local residents, we have major concerns about the application as submitted and wish to record a number of challenges as detailed below. Our members were also irritated by the constant reference to the location being in Reading (with even media focus being on the views of Reading MPs when it is outside their area), when in fact it lies entirely in our parish, in the district of Wokingham.

Continued....

2) **Traffic**- The implications of traffic generation by siting 1,400 new jobs in a full employment area which already has a road system operating over-capacity is a prime concern. The entire Transport Assessment whilst impressive in magnitude being an inch thick, is of little value assessing traffic generation and impact as it is essentially based on the 1996 Baseline Model, which is in itself flawed and inappropriate for predicting the future. This fact was established as Part 1 of the recent Public Inquiry into the District Local Plan, where it was used simply as a tool for making comparisons.

The base Model was developed for one purpose only: to assess and compare traffic mitigation measures proposed by the three development consortia competing to build 2,500 houses south of the M4. It was made clear, at the time of its construction that it was not suitable for predicting future traffic conditions, as the database did not reflect actual current Origin and Destination figures. The statistics used had been adjusted downwards to enable the Model to run, as otherwise, modeling a system at capacity with the software available, was not possible. Furthermore, the Baseline Model should not be used for predicting future traffic, as it cannot predict queue lengths, it cannot predict waiting times and it cannot model the peak-hour load spreading.

Therefore, basing conclusions, such as traffic levels and flows at Junction 11, on this Model, is a useless exercise. In addition, it was known that there was significant peak load spreading and latent demand, which could not be assessed correctly. It is noted that in the traffic analysis that peak load spreading has not been taken into account and no consideration of latent demand mentioned. It is clear that considering a single peak hour period in the case is not sufficient. Peak loading exists over a longer period than one hour and the peak hour is certainly not conveniently defined by an hour on the clock. Also, any commuting analysis must take account of travelling time, which this does not.

The analysis provided does not consider both best and worse case traffic scenarios, nor does it look at the necessary 15 years ahead to prudently consider what effects the further growth in this important strategic developments area will have. We consider these are minimal and essential considerations for the community, which has long term aspirations for their living here.

In considering the traffic effects, it has been suggested that the 2,500 houses to be built south of the M4 will be available to the Met Office staff. This is NOT the case. These houses are being built to satisfy the needs of Reading's 20,000 jobs at and around Green Park. There will therefore be long term commuting for at least 750 of the Met Office employees. This is totally out of line with Government guidance on these matters and out of line with the emerging Local Transport Plan.

Continued...

We welcome the commitment to producing a Green Travel Plan which must be part of any Full Application and should include undertakings to support bus services from Winnersh Triangle to Shinfield Park, which would run through our community at Shinfield Rise, to the benefit of our parishioners. Furthermore, whilst endorsing the logic behind restricted parking provision, we are extremely concerned that this could lead to indiscriminate parking on the surrounding unrestricted road system, to the detriment of our residents.

Were the Council mindful to approve the application, major contributions should be sought to local infrastructure improvements including the funding of the proposed Option 2 Link Road Scheme, with a preferred siting alongside the motorway, rather that an proposed through the middle of a valuable wildlife habitat bounded by Whitley Wood Lane and the M4 motorway.

A final point on traffic issues is that in page 17, para 5.02 of the Planning Statement quotes from the Structure Plan, that in the interests of flexibility, new development may be permissible, where they do "not duly add transport problems of pressures for housing development". Our members are of the firm view that this proposal will do both.

3) **Economic and Employment Considerations** – There would appear to be an incomplete consideration of the other planning applications for the area. Noticeably absent are considerations for all other local commercial developments, which could generate additional 2,500 jobs within one kilometer of the Met Office site: these include Foster Wheeler plus the NIRD site, Church Farm and the Advanced Research Centre. In addition a further 25,000 new jobs will be generated within three kilometers of the site at green park, Reading International Business Park, Reading Gate and the Oracle Centre. As there is full employment in Shinfield, all these jobs will have to be filled by commuters. This scenario must be accurately assessed using the correct tools and current data.

Shinfield Parish is already an extremely stressed economic area. There is a total imbalance in housing provision compared to employment provision. House prices are now totally beyond households on below £30,000to £50,000pa. There is totally inadequate affordable housing provision. The communities are rapidly becoming unbalanced with the numbers of teachers, nurses, tradesman, local government workers and other modest income work groups declining. Surveys have indicated that there is less than 1% unemployment in the area. There is therefore no requirement for additional jobs.

The parish population is already forecast by WDC to grow by an unacceptable 70% in the period 1997-2006 and will rapidly create even more imbalance, as there will be few if any additional lower income group families able to migrate to this 'hot spot'. The planned provision of 500 affordable houses will be taken up by local residents already on the house waiting lists made longer by years of neglect in this sector of the housing market whilst planning has been developer led. Adding further to this growth requirement in this period is clearly not acceptable. Indeed it is even possible, given the need to build and sell at rates in excess of 500 houses a year.

Continued...

4) **Ecology** – The site has very considerable biodiversity, with two types of deer seen regularly, a wide ranging bird population in the ancient woodland which contains the rich flora associated with such sites and will be designated a Wildlife heritage Site (WHS). A substantial buffer zone around the WHS will be required and this needs to be reviewed.

Poor if any provision is made for wildlife corridors to and from the WHS. Within close proximity are two other undeveloped sites, Pearmans Corpse and the wildlife area to the south of Foster Wheeler building, between Whitley Wood and the M4 motorway.

The site is on the prominent SW to NE ridge line with its unpredictable hydrogeology. As the applicant's Ecological Appraisal concedes, the site has been neglected over a long period of time and numerous gullies and run-offs on the north west slopes have caused problems over the years and are clearly not understood by the current land occupiers. Despite local representations, the MOD has failed to respond to resident's fears, and flooding and subsidence caused by water run-off from the ridge has been experienced. It would appear that deliberate failure to keep gullies clear for the purpose of their creation and in some cases deliberately blocking them, has been the practice over many years. This problem has not been addressed and with further development of the site will inevitably be worse.

The site is very well wooded and it would be an unacceptable loss to see numerous mature trees unnecessarily sacrificed. We are concerned about the removal of groups of trees as summarised on page 26 without knowledge of the numbers in each group. However, it is recognised that some trees will inevitably have to go. Careful monitoring of this will be needed and permission for named individuals from the parish to have access to the site for this purpose is requested. Access should be provided on request at 24 hours notice. All individuals would observe whatever safety regulations were in force at the time of inspection. We would urge that the perimeter screening, which we are encouraged to see is to be retained, should be improved for the benefit of residents in adjoining properties.

Finally on matters of ecology, we request that in any consideration of approval for this application, consideration should be given to imposing conditions opening up the areas of Ancient woodland for employment by members of the local community and general public.

5) **Building Design** – We trust that the visuals provided, depicting the proposed building perspectives (Typical Section & Elevation Option S4B) are authentic in terms of the portrayed roofline, with only a couple of slender masts. We consider that any further masts or antennae should be strictly controlled.

Continued...

6) **Shinfield Players Theatre** – Whilst passing reference, relating only to its removal, is made to the existence of this very significant local community facility which is established on the development site, scant regard is given in the proposals to its future well-being. Its future welfare is of paramount importance to this council and the assurances given by Mr Peter Ewins, the Chief Executive of the Met Office at a recent site visit to the current Bracknell facility, were well received by the local council members. Whilst we would wish to leave it to the management of the Shinfield Players to negotiate the details of any proposal for their future, we cannot over-emphasise our anxiety for their continuance.

7) **Section 106 Agreement** – In recognition of the major impact that this proposed development would have in the communities that we represent, we would expect that if the District Council is minded to grant permission, a significant 'developer contribution' would be negotiated with the applicant under Section 106 provision of the Act, taking particular regard to the 'Wish list' of benefits appropriate to our parish, submitted by this council.

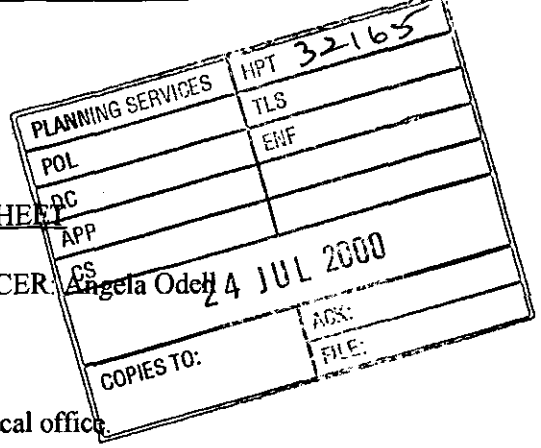
In conclusion, we seek assurances that our comments as detailed above, which have taken considerable time and effort by our members to compile, should be reported in full to members of the Development Control Sub-Committee, before any decision is taken.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Sampson

Mrs Tracy Sampson
Assistant Clerk (0118 9885315)

Copies to:
Mr M Bryant, Mr B Patman, Mr A Pollock – District Councilors
Mr H Hawes of Shinfield Players



TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATION SHEET

APPLICATION NO: F/2000/1714 PLANNING OFFICER: Angela Odell

PARISH: EARLEY (Shinfield Parish Application)

PROPOSAL: Erection of building for use as a meteorological office.

ADDRESS: Shinfield Park

APPLICANT: The Met. Office

Thank you for allowing Earley Town Council the opportunity to comment on this application. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is an extremely prestigious proposal, of paramount concern to the Town Council is the amount of additional traffic which will be generated on a road infrastructure which is already extremely overstretched. Whilst the road improvements, which form part of this application are noted, it was felt that these improvements were flawed. Councillors felt that the proposed new roundabouts should be of a larger scale, and that an additional roundabout was required outside the entrance to the Foster Wheeler Building.

The Town Council is currently involved in compiling a Transport Policy for the Town, which is still at a very initial stage. However, one of the major problem areas which has been identified is the amount of through traffic through the Town and also the amount of congestion at the two access points onto the M4, i.e. junction 11 and junction 10 via the A329 and the Loddon Bridge junction. It was the intention of the Town Council that the document would be presented as a whole to the District Council. However, in view of this planning application and the other current application in this area at the former Shire Hall site, Councillors have requested that one of the proposals to be contained in the Transport Policy should now be given serious consideration by the District Council. This is the creation of a junction 10a onto the M4, which could be created at a suitable location off Lower Earley Way. Councillors felt that consideration could be given to making this junction access only, to avoid traffic leaving the motorway at this point and thus increasing the problem of through traffic in the Town. As previously stated, the Town Council's Transport Policy is at a very initial stage, and it is acknowledged that this suggestion requires considerable more research and thought. However, it is felt that the current applications being considered would give the District Council an ideal opportunity to seriously consider Councillors' suggestion of the creation of this additional junction onto the M4.

Of concern also to Councillors when they discussed this application was the increased pressure which would be created on the already over-stretched housing stock. It is acknowledged that some staff may not wish to relocate, although this will, of course, create its own problems in an increase in commuter traffic. However, this area of the District is already under pressure to allow more residential development on the very valuable green gaps on the Shinfield Parish boundary, and this proposal can only serve to increase this pressure.

Finally, Councillors noted with some concern the loss of the Shinfield Players Theatre. It is requested that, should the Development Control Sub-Committee be mindful to approve this application, a condition of the approval is that the Met Office satisfactorily negotiates with the Shinfield Players to ensure that suitable alternative accommodation is found for them. It is also requested that a condition be imposed requiring the running of shuttle buses between the site and the proposed park and ride scheme near to junction 11.

A copy of these observations has been forward to the Head of Engineering Services.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: 20 JUL 2000

CLERK TO EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

The Ramblers' Association
Working for walkers

PLANNING SERVICES | HPT 32694
POL | PLS
DC AO
APP
CS
07 ... 00
COPIES TO: | ACK:
FILE:

Berkshire Area
Groups: East Berks
Great Park • Loddon Valley
Mid-Berks • Pang Valley
South East Berks • West Berks

70 Broad Hinton
TWYFORD
Berks RG10 OLP

Tel/Fax: 0118 9320285

4 August 2000

M/S Angela Odell
Development Control
WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

APPLICATION NO. F/2000/1714

Dear Sirs

Thank you for your letter of 4th July enclosing details of this application.

1. We would like to see this opportunity taken to improve the whole ambience of this most unappealing, 'prison camp' style Footpath adjoining the site. It should not be considered acceptable today to have to walk between high metal mesh fences, topped with coiled razor-wire!

2. We would also like to see proposals made here to open up for public enjoyment the extensive area of 'ancient woodland' within this site. Perhaps this would be an opportunity for the District Council even to acquire this particular area, so close to a centre of population.

Yours faithfully

DAVID BOUNDS
Footpath Secretary
Loddon Valley RA Group

Registered charity number 1060689

ENGLISH HERITAGE

SOUTH EAST REGION

PLANNING SERVICES | HPT 32280
POL | TLS
DC BO | ENF
APP |
CS |
26 JUL 2000
COPIES TO: | ACK:
FILE:

Wokingham District Council
Environmental Services
Planning Services
PO Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berks RG40 1WR

Direct dial: 01483 306730

Your ref: AO/0/2000/1714

24th July 2000

Dear Sir,

Notification under Environment Circular 14/97
Planning Application

Address: Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield, Reading

Thank you for notifying English Heritage of this planning application affecting the setting of a grade II listed building.

The application is accompanied by a single drawing no. SK007B - sketch site/building footprint, layout option S4B. This appears to indicate considerable demolition to the southern wing of the lodge, a listed building.

Before English Heritage can usefully advise on this application, it would be necessary for these areas to be clearly identified: subsequent to that it may also be necessary to approve a specification of repair works to the exposed walls of the remaining parts of the listed building.

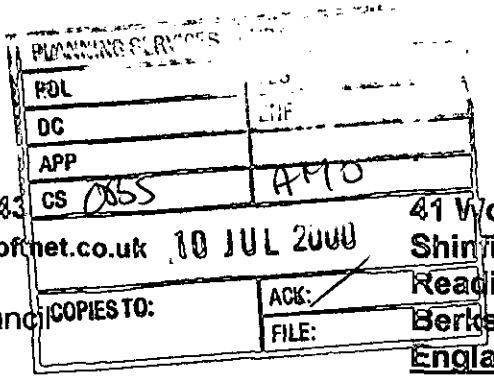
With regard to the proposed new building, while English Heritage has no information on the scale or bulk of the building, the footprint appears extremely large for the site and for the 18th century lodge it will abutt.

Upon the receipt of this additional information English Heritage would be happy to comment further.

Yours faithfully,

p S Angell

Mrs PA Monroe
Historic Buildings Advisor
South East Region



Tele +44 (0)118 986 0043
e-mail Jeff@jeffshouse.softnet.co.uk

41 Woodside Way,
Shinfield,
Reading,
Berkshire, RG2 8SY
England

Wokingham District Council
Planning Services
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1WR

your ref **0/2000/1714**
my ref D:gen00/met/met1

Dear Sir

9 July, 2000

Meteorological Office – Shinfield Park Application 0/20000/1714

I am writing to object to the scope of the development of the Training College Meteorological Office, as a new headquarters for the Meteorological Service. In addition, I will be writing the WDC Chief Executive separately to complain about the with consultation process.

The main thrust of the application is that the proposed development is of "low level" and in accordance with the various structure plans, and that to refuse permission would harm the economical status of the County. The application goes on to indicate that there would be small increase in local traffic.

The application is almost a work of fiction.

1) **Low level development.**
It is proposed to provide office and operational accommodation for 1,400 persons on a site, which currently has at, best 250 people now. This is not "low level" development, and therefore not in accordance with the structure plans.

2) **Building unsympathetic.**
The proposed building design is unsympathetic to the local area that is semi-rural (not urban as the proposal says) and abuts ancient woodland. Reference is made to the Foster Wheler (Shire Hall) building, which is a large lump of beige concrete, however because of its colour it does go some way to blend in. More importantly, *if planning permission was now sought for such a building I would not expected to be granted.* The proposed building is a blue / glass structure that would stand out like a sore thumb.

3) Transport and Access.
The application attempts to show that that the site occupancy increased to 1,400 people would have minor affect on the transport infrastructure. The application claims that many of the staff would be able to use public transport. The application then admits most of the Met Office Staff live in the Bracknell / Wokingham Town areas, and makes a hopeful reference that some may at some stage relocate. The only public transport to serve the area is a bus service that also serves the Whitely Wood area of Reading, and is on a radial route from Reading Town Centre. There is no nearby Railway Station and the

nearest – Early has no further public transport to Shinfield Park. Therefore, the only conclusion is that private cars would be used, this borne out by the provision of a huge car park. During the peak hours the roads around that area are already very congested, with stationary traffic backing up to and past Hyde End Road, Shinfield and Early Way into lower early. Government policy is clear on the use of private transport, and the encouragement of public, and this scheme effectively runs counter to that policy.

4) Economic Development.
The application infers that by not granting the application great harm would be done to the Reading area and Berkshire economy. This is not supported by the facts; the Thames Valley has a superheated economy with many companies suffering staff shortages, house prices are continuing to increase. In fact there is a very good case for reducing development and improving the quality of life for the people already here.

5) Environmental Considerations.
The proposal indicates that there would be the destruction of 40 trees including a number of specimens. There is no justification whatsoever in this. The design should have been such that no trees were lost, especially considering the local wildlife and the adjoining woodland. The inclusion of a huge car park using up the open green space makes a travesty of the government "brown field" policy, further the emission of noise and fumes in this area would affect the wildlife. There has been no consideration on the damaging visual effect of the buildings during the winter months, when the trees in the woodland are bare of leaves.

6) Local Amenities.
The plans call for the demolition of the Shinfield Players Theatre, and the provision of their own social club. This show's the contempt the Met. Office no has for the local population. A social club would cause noise and disturbance outside of normal hours.

There is no local facility for staff working at the proposed offices. The nearest shops are at Shinfield Rise, without a bank or cash machine and are about 1Km away. There is ASDA at Lower Early about 2Km. This would liable to cause a lunchtime traffic problem.

7) Other Development
The proposal makes a lot of the proposed housing development, including a new link road (which is news to me). This is a smoke screen and has very little to do with these proposals, as it assumes Met. Office staff are all going to move to the development, and that any new park and ride facilities would provide transport to the offices. However, there is the new "Green Park" development in Reading that would be suitable for office relocation.

To summarise: -

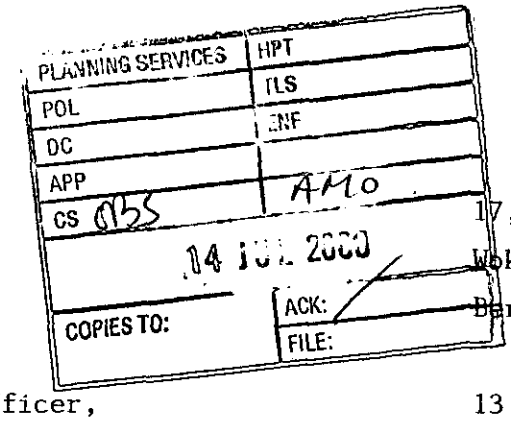
1. The development is not consistent with the structure plans.
2. There is insufficient public transport or road infrastructure to support such a large development.
3. There would be a detrimental effect on the local environment including the ancient woodlands.
4. There are suitable alternatives in the area (Green Park)

In conclusion, I would support the replacing some of the old buildings on the site, as it is clear they are no longer service able, but the scale of the development should be in line with the current occupancy.
I would expect Wokingham District Council to be vigorous in opposing these proposals.

Yours Faithfully



J.R.Rowlinson



17,Copse Drive,
Wokingham,
Berks. RG41 1NA

13 July,2000

The Chief Planning Officer,
Environmental Services Dept.,
Wokingham District Council,
Council Offices,
Shute End,
Wokingham.

Dear Sir,

APPLICATION NO.O/2000/1714 - PROPOSED ERECTION OF BUILDING FOR METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE AT SHINFIELD PARK,SHINFIELD ROAD,READING.

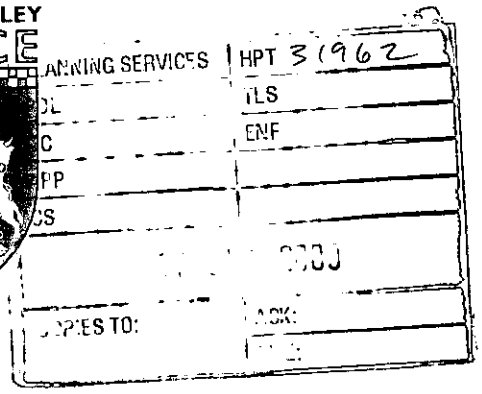
Having studied the plans for the above application,Wokingham District CPRE is concerned that the highway provisions made for the new site are inadequate.We are aware that the traffic model used is inappropriate for predicting future traffic behaviour and given the existing traffic situation, coupled with further development south of the M4 and at the old Shire Hall site,the extra traffic generated by the proposed Meteorological Office building may well be the "straw that broke the camel's back".

Wokingham District CPRE therefore ask the District Council to press for a more far-reaching solution to absorbing the extra traffic generated.

Yours faithfully,

Dr.S.P.Wilford(Chairman,Wokingham District CPRE)

THAMES VALLEY
POLICE



P.C. Dave STUBBS
Crime Prevention Design Adviser
(Berks)

Thatcham Police Station
20, Chapel Street
Thatcham, BERKS.
RG18 4QL
Tel. 01635 295156
Fax. 01635 295126

Date 14th July 2000

For 'Secured by Design' standards and application forms
Visit the 'SBD' website at :-
www.securedbydesign.com

Mrs. A. Odell
Planning Department
Wokingham District Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
BERKS.
RG40 1WR

Your Ref. 1714

Dear Mrs. Odell.

Meteorological Office - Shinfield Park.

Thank you for the details of the plans in respect of the above site.

There is no objection to the principle of this proposal on crime or disorder grounds. Being a defence estates establishment, there will be minimum levels of security specified as part of the project requirements.

In the light of the duty on local authorities to do all that they reasonably can to prevent crime & disorder under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, the potential crime risks facing this proposal include burglary & other offences related high tech. scientific sites.

The council can help to discharge its duty in respect of its planning function under Sec. 17 by taking the above comments into account when arriving at its decision.

I trust this will be of assistance and thank you for your consultation.

Yours sincerely.

P.C. Dave STUBBS
Thames Valley Police
CPDA. (Berks.)

Our ref: SP\2000\001979\001
Your ref: O/2000/1714

Date: 4th July 2000

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

31602

PLANNING
POL
DC
APP
CS
10 JUL 2000
COPIES TO:
ACK:
FILE:

District Planning Officer
Wokingham District Council
Council Offices,
Shute End,
Po Box 157
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG11 1BN

For the attention of: Angela Odell

Dear Sir

OUTLINE - ERECTION OF BUILDING FOR USE AS METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE AT TRAINING COLLEGE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE, SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

Thank you for your letter dated 20 June 2000 which was received on 27 June 2000. You are asked to quote the following reference in any correspondence: **SU76NW/24/8**. The Environment Agency has the following comments:

The Environment Agency has no objection, in principle, to the proposed development provided that the following conditions are imposed on any planning permission granted:

PLANNING CONDITIONS

CONDITION: Surface water source control measures shall be carried out in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences.
REASON: To prevent the increased risk of flooding and to improve water quality.

CONDITION: No soakaways shall be constructed such that they penetrate the water table, and they shall not in any event exceed 3 metres in depth below existing ground level.
REASON: To prevent pollution of groundwater.

CONDITION: No soakaways shall be constructed in contaminated ground.
REASON: To prevent pollution of groundwater.

PLANNING INFORMATIVES

The following planning informatives should be attached to any planning permission granted:

Cont/d..

Environment Agency
Swift House, Frimley Business Park, Frimley, Camberley, Surrey GU16 5SQ
Telephone : 01276 454300 Fax : 01276 454301

Under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991, the prior written consent of the Environment Agency is required for any discharge of sewage or trade effluent into controlled waters (e.g. watercourses and underground waters), and may be required for any discharge of surface water to such controlled waters or for any discharge of sewage or trade effluent from buildings or fixed plant into or onto ground or into waters which are not controlled waters. Such consent may be withheld. *Contact Andrea Szabados on 01276 45 4373 for details.*

ADVICE TO PLANNING AUTHORITY

Development Control: Contact Amanda Reed on 01276 45 4331

We are not aware of any watercourses on the site, but should there be any, we advise that:
(1) they should not be culverted; and
(2) a buffer zone is left on either side of any watercourse, and
(3) culverted watercourses should not be built over, but should ideally be opened up and made a feature of the site.

In any case, you should note that culverting of a watercourse requires the prior written approval of the local authority under the terms of the Public Health Act 1936, and the prior written consent of the Environment Agency under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991/Water Resources Act 1991. The Agency seeks to avoid culverting, and its consent for such works will normally be withheld.

There are alternatives to conventional storage for the control of surface water run-off that are favoured by the Environment Agency where ground conditions are suitable and groundwater is not at risk. These techniques not only cater for flood peak attenuation, but may also improve water quality and enhance the environment. Such systems include permeable pavements, grassed swales, infiltration trenches, ponds and wetlands. The developer is advised to discuss with the Agency how these techniques might be applied at this site.

In order to manage the disposal of surface water in a more sustainable manner, taking into account flood risk and other environmental factors, the Environment Agency is likely to recommend that restrictions are imposed on the discharge of surface water from the site. Particular care must be exercised where there is an increase in the impermeable area. The developer will be required to accommodate excess water and control its release into local watercourses, whether directly or by means of the local surface water sewerage system.

ADVICE TO APPLICANT

Environment Protection: Contact Nick Weddell on 01276 454405

Surface water from hard surfaced areas should discharge via deep seal trapped gullies incorporating a minimum water seal of 85mm or similar.

Surface water from car parks for 30 or more cars should be passed through a suitable type of oil/ grit separator, the design of which shall be to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency

Clean roof water should not pass through the oil separator. Where soakaways are used it should preferably not discharge to soakaways used to drain road and vehicle parking areas.

Cont/d..

Drainage from covered car parking floors should not discharge to the surface water system. Where roof parking is proposed surface water should pass through an approved oil separator before connecting to the surface water system.

Roof water downpipes should be connected to the drainage system either directly, or by means of back inlet gullies provided with sealing plates instead of open gratings.

All sewage or trade effluent should be discharged to the foul sewer if available subject to the approval of Thames Water Utilities or its sewerage agent.

Any open chemical or refuse storage areas should be surrounded by suitable liquid tight bunded compounds to prevent drainage from these areas discharging into the surface water system. Such areas should be connected to the foul sewer subject to the approval of Thames Water Utilities or its sewerage agent.

Conservation: Contact Liz Baldwin on 01276 45 4430

Essential tree felling, branch removal and scrub clearance should avoid the bird nesting season. Planting should consist of locally native species only.

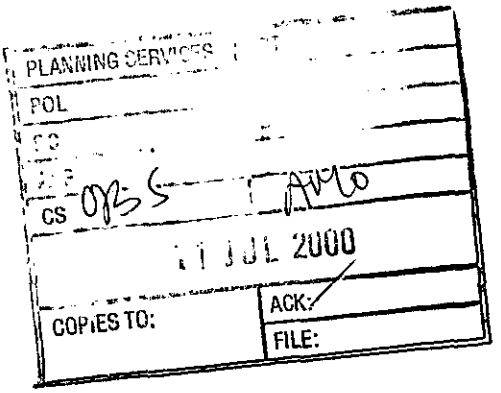
DECISION NOTICE

Would you please forward a copy of the decision notice to this office quoting our reference.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact myself on 01276 454 323 quoting the reference cited at the beginning of this letter.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Paxman
Development Planning Officer



Mr E Whyte
37 Woodside
Whitley Wood Road
Reading
RG2 8SY

10-07-20

Mrs A Odell (Ref:AO/O/2000/1714)
Senior Planner
P O Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1WR

Dear Mrs Odell

Application O/2000/1714
Proposed Met Office Re-Location to Shinfield Park,Shinfield.

Thank you for your letter of 30 June in reply to my communication of 27 June.

However,may I refer to my item (3) Car Parking Woodside Way. Residents' parking Permits would be necessary for the reasons already given. Nore's Road was only mentioned as it appeared in the documents to be linked with thé proposed new Social Club car park.

My attention has recently been drawn to Application No:98/67693/F Met Office College Shinfield Park,Shinfield.
Is this re-building programme separate from the Bracknell works shewn in Application No: O/2000/1714.

Please advise me accordingly.

Yours sincerely

E. Whyte

Eric Whyte

Angela Odell

From: Andy Glencross
Sent: 10 July 2000 11:42
To: Angela Odell
Subject: Met Office Planning Application O/2000/1714

Hi Angela

Thanks for sending me the Ecological Appraisal for the above. My views are as follows : -

* I broadly endorse the ecological appraisal(EA).
* It should supersede the tree survey with regard to the Veteran Trees and their management. Especially the realignment of the road to save one of the trees.
* The EA states that the species rich grassland will be unaffected by the development. However my reading of the drawings indicates that the proposed car park would in fringe on this habitat, and this needs to be clarified.
* It should be stated that the re-introduction of coppice management would benefit both dormice and the ancient woodland flora. This is implied within the report but not clearly stated.
* I would like to see some form of agreement (Section 106?) to ensure the benefits outlined are achieved in the future.

I hope this is of help to you.

Cheers

Andy Glencross

TO: **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL** FROM: Environmental Design
Angela Odell

DATE: 18 July 2000

Location:	Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield
Proposal:	OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF BUILDING FOR USE AS METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE
Application Number:	O/2000/1714

In response to your consultation dated 21 June and 7 July 2000 for the above application, the landscape comments are as follows:

The site is located in a prominent position on top of a ridgeline with the steeper slopes to the west heavily wooded. The adjacent Foster Wheeler building is very prominent in views from the south and west above the wooded scarp face. The site is sensitive in terms of location and prominence within the landscape and incorporates parkland type planting with the extensive areas of vegetation on the site contributing to the overall wooded character of the area.

I do not consider that the proposals as shown, take account of the landscape as a whole, due to the lack of integration of both the car park and the building into the existing landscape character and setting, nor do they relate well to each other. The design of the building, itself, is very insular and inward looking, not integrating into the existing landscape structure of the parkland setting. As the building is set in an extensive area of open ground, why is there a need for a courtyard area? when it could be much more closely related to the existing landscape. The building could also be a landmark building in terms of sustainability and have an innovative environmental design policy to consider energy conscious design, waste minimisation and water conservation, which would be wholly appropriate for its ultimate use.

The position and extent of the car park is fairly arbitrarily placed on site, intruding into the parkland type landscape and is a massive structure relating little to the building nor the site. A car parking area, however, could be effectively designed so that it is a much less intrusive feature within the landscape and has a better relationship with the building. It may be appropriate in this setting to have some underground parking to reduce the impact of extensive areas of hard surfacing.

The eastern boundary of the site with Shinfield Road is designated as a Green Route with a significant tree belt along the road within the site. This will be

breached in part by the new road junction and access into the site, where a substantial amount of vegetation will be removed as a result of these alterations. In the Landscape Appraisal document, Photograph 2 demonstrates that at present there are no views of the existing buildings within the site due to existing landscape features. This is rather academic as the proposals clearly show that these features will be removed, opening up wide views into the site from Shinfield Road from this point, to the proposed building which will be clearly visible above the new planting proposed at this junction.

In principle I have no objection to a building of the size and scale of the proposal being built within the site, however the proposals as shown are not acceptable in terms of the integration of the building and car park within a parkland type setting and character of the existing landscape. A more sensitive and sustainable design solution could be provided to take account of the existing landscape structure of the site.

Catherine Brimble
Landscape Architect

Tel. 0118 974 6445 (Direct Line)
E-mail: Angela.Odell@wokingham.gov.uk
Date. 17 July, 2000
My ref. AO/O/2000/1714

Mr. H Hawes
9 Ashmere Close
Calcot
READING
RG31 7EN

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 977 8909
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Mr Hawes

APPLICATION O/2000/1714
CONSULTATION UNDER CIRCULAR 18/84
PROPOSED MET OFFICE RELOCATION TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

Thank you for your letter of 4 July. The contents have been noted and will be included in the Development Control Committee agenda report when the application is considered for determination (of the observations to be forwarded under the Circular) by the Committee. We will also bear the contents of your letter in mind during any negotiations.

Thank you also for the invitation to John Mitchell and myself to attend a performance. However, we consider that this would not be appropriate at this time.

Meanwhile, if you wish to discuss the matter further please contact me.

Yours sincerely

AO.

MRS A ODELL
Senior Planner

SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane, Reading. RG2 9DF
Telephone number 0118 987 3057
Box Office 0118 926 7135

~~PATRON – ANTON RODGERS~~

Affiliated to N.O.D.A. *Registered Charity No. 265742*

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT
POL	TLS 31454
DC AMO	ENF
APP	
CS	
06 JUL 2000	
COPIES TO:	ACK:
	FILE:

RR

Tel/No (0118) 941 0305

9 Ashmere Close,
Calcot,
Reading.
RG31 7EN

4TH July 2000

Dear Angela,

With reference to our telephone conversation of today, I am writing to express my concern regarding the relocation of the Meteorological Office at Bracknell to the Shinfield Park site to combine with the European Medium Range Weather Forecasting Centre and the Meteorological College. The management of the Shinfield Players Theatre are currently in dialogue with the Relocation Team for this project and plans for the new site have been examined which reveal that where the Theatre is situated, there is the possibility that this area will be used for the erection of a new Sports and Social Club and Crèche and would require the removal of the Theatre.

This initially caused us great concern, with indications that the Theatre would have to close down permanently with the catastrophic loss of this facility to the community. When one considers that the Theatre boasts a membership of 217, 80 of which are Youth Group members whose ages range from 8 to 18 years, teaching them discipline and confidence, plus the fact that this facility presents a new production every five weeks, bringing live theatre, not only to Shinfield, but the surrounding area as well, would be a tremendous blow.

The Shinfield Theatre members own the actual building itself and lease the small piece of land from the Ministry of Defence on a 5-year, renewable lease. Part of the lease agreement is that the Ministry can give us 6 months notice to quit with minimum compensation and it would be beyond our means to raise sufficient monies to buy a piece of land and erect another Theatre. This prompted the Theatre Management and its members to consider mounting a serious campaign to "Save Shinfield Theatre". Fortunately the Met' Office have not followed this line and as stated are in productive dialogue with us, and recent indications are that they have no intention of closing this facility permanently. I am given to understand that there are possibly three offers on the table: -

1. The possibility that the plans may be adjusted to allow us to stay where we are. A suggestion for an alternative site has been submitted to the Relocation Team by us.

2. That the building be dismantled and re-erected on a new site within the complex. Initial reaction to this is that the building would not stand this type of relocation, also it would mean closing down the Theatre for a period with the subsequent loss of an audience and which is very difficult to recapture.

3. That the Meteorological Office would build us a new Theatre with the Shinfield Management and it's members having total autonomy.

As far as the Shinfield Players are concerned this is obviously good news and it is hoped that one of the above suggestions will come to fruition. If this fails then it is the intention of the Theatre management and its members to mount a serious campaign to object most strongly to the closure of this most important facility.

I enclose with this letter a "History of the Shinfield Players and the Shinfield Theatre" which was produced to celebrate the new millennium and hope that you find it of interest. It relates the founding of the Shinfield Players and what has been achieved to the present date.

Finally, since the purchase of this building and its erection on its current site in 1970, members, both past and present have raised enormous amounts of money to ensure that the building was of a good standard, safe and comfortable for its audiences and, since its opening, it is estimated that a figure approaching £250,000 has been spent on this project. Over the last two years alone a total of £42,000 has been spent on rewiring the Theatre completely bringing it up to the latest E.C. Standards. A new roof covering has been put in place ensuring the building remains watertight and the Car Park has been resurfaced for the comfort and safety of our patrons. This Theatre is a true Community Theatre and all persons of whatever race or creed are welcome to use this facility. It would be a complete tragedy if this Theatre were forced to close down.

Yours sincerely

Henry

Henry Hawes – Chairman Shinfield Players Theatre.

Angela Odell,
Environmental Services Department,
Planning Services,
P.O.Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berks.
RG40 1WR

Tel. 0118 974 6445 (Direct Line)
E-mail: Angela.Odell@wokingham.gov.uk
Date. 30 June, 2000
My ref. AO/O/2000/1714
Your ref. 9906/A3/WD/SLH

Barton Willmore
Beansheaf Farmhouse
Bourne Close
Calcot
READING
RG31 7BW

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 977 8909
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Mr Dawes

APPLICATION O/2000/1714
CONSULTATION UNDER CIRCULAR 18/84
PROPOSED MET OFFICE RELOCATION TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

Thank you for your letter of 28 June. Whilst we appreciate that the Met. Office have a tight time scale, I am sure that you will understand that this is a large and complex proposal on which we have to consult other parties. We are therefore dependent, at least to some extent, on the other parties. We shall endeavour to place the application before the Development Control Committee as soon as possible, but can give no timetable at this stage.

Meanwhile, if you wish to discuss the above further please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Ao.

MRS A ODELL
Senior Planner

PLANNING
POL
DC
APP 31166
CS
COPIES TO: ACK:
FILE:

The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership - Reading
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot,
Reading, RG31 7BW.
Tel 0118 943 0000 Fax 0118 943 0002
e-mail: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

Barton Willmore
Planning

Director of Environmental Services,
Wokingham District Council,
PO Box 157, Council Offices,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
BERKSHIRE. RG40 1WR

F.A.O. MRS. A. ODELL

9906/A3/WD/DW

28th June, 2000

Dear Madam,

PROPOSED MET OFFICE RELOCATION TO SHINFIELD PARK
CONSULTATION UNDER CIRCULAR 18/84
APPLICATION NO. 0/2000/1714

We refer to your letter dated 26th June, 2000 requesting an extension of time in order to give observations on the above consultation.

You will appreciate that the Met Office are faced with a very tight time scale if they are to relocate by the end of 2002. I am of the opinion that if the Met Office are to grant an extension of time it should be on the basis of an agreed timetable for the progress of the application to a suitable Planning Committee date. Certainly the Met Office would not wish the consultation to "slip" beyond this August before any observations are received.

Perhaps you would contact the writer to discuss a likely timetable.

On a related matter we shortly intend to provide you with our ecological appraisal of the land at Shinfield Park carried out on behalf of the Met Office by Bioscan (UK) Limited.

Yours faithfully,

D Williams.

W.R. DAWES
Senior Planner

Certificate No. FS 29637

Town Planners • Environmental Consultants
Architects • Master Planners • Project Services

Contact: Gareth Capner, Ian Tant, Roger Turnbull, Mark Sitch

A list of partners can be inspected here and at our associated offices in:
Bristol Cambridge Edinburgh Leeds London West Malling (Kent)

Tel. 0118 974 6445 (Direct Line)
E-mail: Angela.Odell@wokingham.gov.uk
Date. 29 June, 2000
My ref. AO/O/2000/1714
Your ref. 9906/A3/WD/SLH

Barton Willmore
Beansheaf Farmhouse
Bourne Close
Calcot
READING
RG31 7BW

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 977 8909
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Mr Dawes

APPLICATION O/2000/1714
CONSULTATION UNDER CIRCULAR 18/84
PROPOSED MET OFFICE RELOCATION TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

I enclose notes of members' comments, concerns and questions from the Committee on 28 June. The date for the members' site visit to the application site is to be Thursday 20 July at 10 a.m. Please could you arrange for this with the Met. Office. I attach a copy of the map which will be sent to members.

Has the issue of archaeology been looked into? (I have not found any reference to it in either the Planning or Landscape Appraisal documents, and I know that it is an issue generally in the area.)

If you wish to discuss any of the above further please contact me.

Yours sincerely

AO.

MRS A ODELL
Senior Planner

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE 28.6.00 – APPLICATION O/2000/1714 – PROPOSED RELOCATION OF MET. OFFICE TO SHINFIELD PARK

Notes of comments/concerns /questions voiced by members

Members were generally supportive of the proposal and recognised the importance of the Met. Office.

Traffic
The main concern was the expected significant exacerbation of traffic congestion problems on the A327 Shinfield Road and B3270, which would get worse anyway with consented developments nearby in the pipeline. Significant financial contribution needed to local road improvements (one member suggested that the southern Blackboy roundabout should be graded separated to allow the A327 to go straight through). Also existing congestion problems at junction 11 of the M4 and the Winnersh Triangle exit of the A329M are likely to be exacerbated.
Who owns the land between the A327 and Foster Wheeler? (was B.C.C. land)
How many staff are on the site at a time?

Parking – Concern was expressed at the 750 parking spaces proposed and that such a high number compared with the much lower number at the London Road premises would encourage more commuting in by car.

Buses – Need looking at.

Trains – Need to see if can get SW Trains to stop the trains at Winnersh Triangle station more frequently than once per half hour.

Cycleways – Need to look at, and in particular bringing forward the proposed cycleway on the rest of Lower Earley Way.

Other points
Housing - London Road site – Need to ensure redeveloped for housing.

Hillside School – Problem of weather centre staff's children not speaking English as a first language. (I understand from Graham Cooper that these are children of the ECMWF staff, and therefore this point is not expected to be exacerbated if the Met. Office moves to Shinfield Park.) Also pressure on educational facilities

Health – Any known health problems associated with the Met. Office? (This raised as the Met. Office has a lot of equipment, including transmitting and receiving devices – prompted by health concerns associated with mobile phone masts.)

Visual impact of building – will be prominent

Beaufort Park site – A member noted this site is outside a settlement boundary.

AO – 29/6/00

Tel. 0118 974 6445 (Direct Line)
E-mail: Angela.Odell@wokingham.gov.uk
Date. 30 June, 2000
My ref. AO/O/2000/1714

Mr E Whyte
37 Woodside Way
Whitley Wood Road
READING
RG2 8SY

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 977 8909
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Mr Whyte

APPLICATION O/2000/1714
CONSULTATION UNDER CIRCULAR 18/84
PROPOSED MET. OFFICE RELOCATION TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

Thank you for your letter of 27 June. I reply to your points as follows:

1. Due to the slope of the hill and the distance of the proposed main building from the rear of Woodside Way and the low height of the proposed 2 storey car park, it is anticipated that neither the proposed building nor the car park will be visible from the rear of your property.

2. The proposed vehicular access to the social club will be from the top of Whitley wood Lane only (i.e. close the existing access to the Met. Office near the junction of Whitley Wood Lane and Shinfield Road.

3. The proposed development includes a car park for 750 cars, which should be sufficient for the Met. Office staff. However, if the development does go ahead and you find that Met. Office staff are using Nore's Road for parking, then the matter of Residents' parking Permits could be considered.

4. Both members and officers of this Council are aware of the traffic problems in the area. The Met. Office's proposals in terms of measures to encourage and enable staff to get to work without using cars, and in terms of contribution to local highway improvements will be looked at very carefully before our observations are forwarded to the Met. Office.

5. Yes, it is anticipated that the need for re-housing will be minimal.

I trust this provides satisfactory answers to the points you have raised, but if you wish for any further information or to discuss the proposal further please contact me.

Yours sincerely

AO

MRS A ODELL,
Senior Planner

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT
POL	TLS
DC	ENF
APP	
CS	
29 JUN 2000	
COPIES TO:	ACK: ✓
	FILE:

Mr E Whyte
37 Woodside Way
Whitley Wood Road
Reading
RG2 8SY

27-06-20

Tel:0118 9861731

Angela Odell (Ref: 0/2000/1714)
Planning Officer
P O Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham RG40 1WR

Dear Madam

Application No. 0/2000/1714

Proposed outline application for erection of further buildings at Shinfield Park (Meteorological Office).

With reference to the above and John Mitchells communication of the 20 June,we the undersigned attended Woodley Library at 0930 on Saturday 24 June for the purpose of checking through the Plans in question to ascertain the effects it may have on our area.

It therefore follows,that after a brief study we have some comments to make and there may have been further remarks had more time been savailable to study the detailed plans.

(1) Erection of new buildings. Will the Nores Copse (W H S) provide an effective screen for the private houses in Woodside Way (Shinfield) during the winter as well as the summer months. Also,if any aerials or antenna are fitted to the buildings will they be so screened so as not to provide a local health risk or cause interference to radio or television receivers.

(2) Car Parking for Social Club. In the proposed outline application there is a reference to Nores Road. Was this intended to be a second route in and out for the cars from this particular car park and if so where would the new road join Nores Road,in order to gain access into Whitley Wood Road.

(3) Parking Woodside Way. This small country road is already used by some Staff from Reading to gain access to the Public Footpath leading up to Shire Hall etc and also in some cases it is evident that some cars are being left in Woodside Way during office hours. Therefore,if the planning application is approved,it would be essential for the Council to arrange for the issue of Residential Car Parking Permits to householders in this road.

(4) You will no doubt concede that in view of the number of documents that were available,it was not possible in the time to study in depth the various proposed new road alterations. However,we would like to draw your attention to Whitley Wood Lane;that part of the road leading up from the M.4. motorway direction to the roundabout near the,"Engineers Arms" Public House. The traffic in this area is already very heavy in both directions during the morning and evening rush hours and is also a busy bus route.

(5) Staff Re-location. In view of the comparative short road mileage between the Bracknell area and Shinfield Park,it must be assumed that the need for re-housing will be minimal in the Reading District and/or other local areas.

Finally,it would have been most helpfull at the Woodley Library on Saturday 24 June,if you or one of your colleagues or even a local councillor had been present to answer some of our preliminary questions.

Please keep us advised.

Yours faithfully

E.Whyte

V.Whyte

C.McCarron

P.McCarron

WARD: Shinfield

6.00 APPLICATION O/2000/1714 PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

Purpose of Report

6.01 To advise members of receipt of the above application.

Suggested Action

6.02 To ask members to note receipt of the above application and to advise officers of any concerns or requests for further information.

Background Information

6.03 The Meteorological Office is consulting WDC regarding its proposed development under arrangements used by government departments under Circular 18/84. (The Meteorological Office are part of the Ministry of Defence.)

The agents have explained that the Met. Office is a world leader in meteorology and climatology and is the forefront of scientific and technological development. Its existing headquarters buildings in Bracknell are outdated and too costly to be worth modernising, and are inconveniently located in several buildings. The proposal for new building at their Shinfield Park site has been made because they already own it. (It currently accommodates their training operation.) This site is also attractive to them as it would strengthen existing links with the European Centre for Medium Weather Forecasting (on adjacent land) and with Reading University.
The Met. Office is also consulting with Bracknell Forest BC under Circular 18/84 with regard to the construction of a similar, alternative headquarters building at their Beaufort Park site. (Beaufort Park is sited north of Nine Mile Ride and east of Old Wokingham Road in Bracknell Forest BC.) Following both consultations, The Met. Office will consider their position with regard to relocation. At present relocation away from the Reading-Bracknell area has not been considered in detail, nor have other non Met. Office owned sites in the locality. The future use of the Met. Office's London Road, Bracknell site will be the subject of a planning brief to be prepared in conjunction with Bracknell Forest BC. It is envisaged that a mixed use redevelopment could take place on the site, including opportunities for new housing.

The Proposal

6.04 The proposal is in outline for a 33,351 m² headquarters office/computer/ ancillary teaching building, car parking, a social building (including creche) and an accommodation block for students. The indictive plans show a 3 storey office block and a decked car park with 750 spaces . About 1,500 staff are expected (nearly all transferred from Bracknell). All existing buildings on the site would be demolished except the Grade II Listed Lodge. The main access would be directly onto the existing roundabout on Shinfield Road. A

Green Transport Plan is proposed, including a possible shuttle bus service to Winnersh Triangle Station to collect staff, many of whom currently live in Bracknell and Wokingham. A contribution is also proposed to highway improvements in the local area, which may include re-modelling the roundabout and the WDC scheme for proposed road improvements to the B3270.

Planning Issues.

6.05 The site is within a settlement boundary and an initial assessment has not identified any obvious physical or visual site objections. The main issues are therefore considered to be the strategic ones of potential pressures on housing and transport. Regarding housing, this is essentially considered to be an issue for central Berkshire as a whole in this case. The agents have pointed out that the proposal is essentially a relocation of existing staff from offices nearby in Bracknell, and that a new settlement for up to 2,500 houses is proposed to be nearby. The extent to which additional housing pressure is a concern will depend partly if not mainly on what happens to the existing vacated sites in Bracknell; in particular the amount of new housing (if any) which could offset this potential pressure, and the amount of office/ employment floorspace which would add to pressure in any mixed use redevelopment. The highway officer will assess the effect of the proposal on highways and transport.

The alternative site at Beaufort Park in Bracknell Forest BC is outside a settlement boundary and in a gap between settlements.

Consultations

6.06 WDC expect to be consulted on the proposal at Beaufort Park, and we have sent consultations to Bracknell Forrest BC, Reading BC and the Joint Strategic Planning Unit (amongst others).

Equal Opportunities Implications

6.07 None

Financial Implications

6.08 Contributions towards highway improvements locally are proposed. Other contributions towards services and infrastructure may be requested.

Consultations with Parish and Town Councils/Voluntary Sector Organisations

6.09 Shinfield Parish Council and Earley Town Council have been consulted and any comments received will be reported.

Environmental Implications

6.10 Will be assessed when the application is reported to the Committee for observations to be sent to the Met. Office.

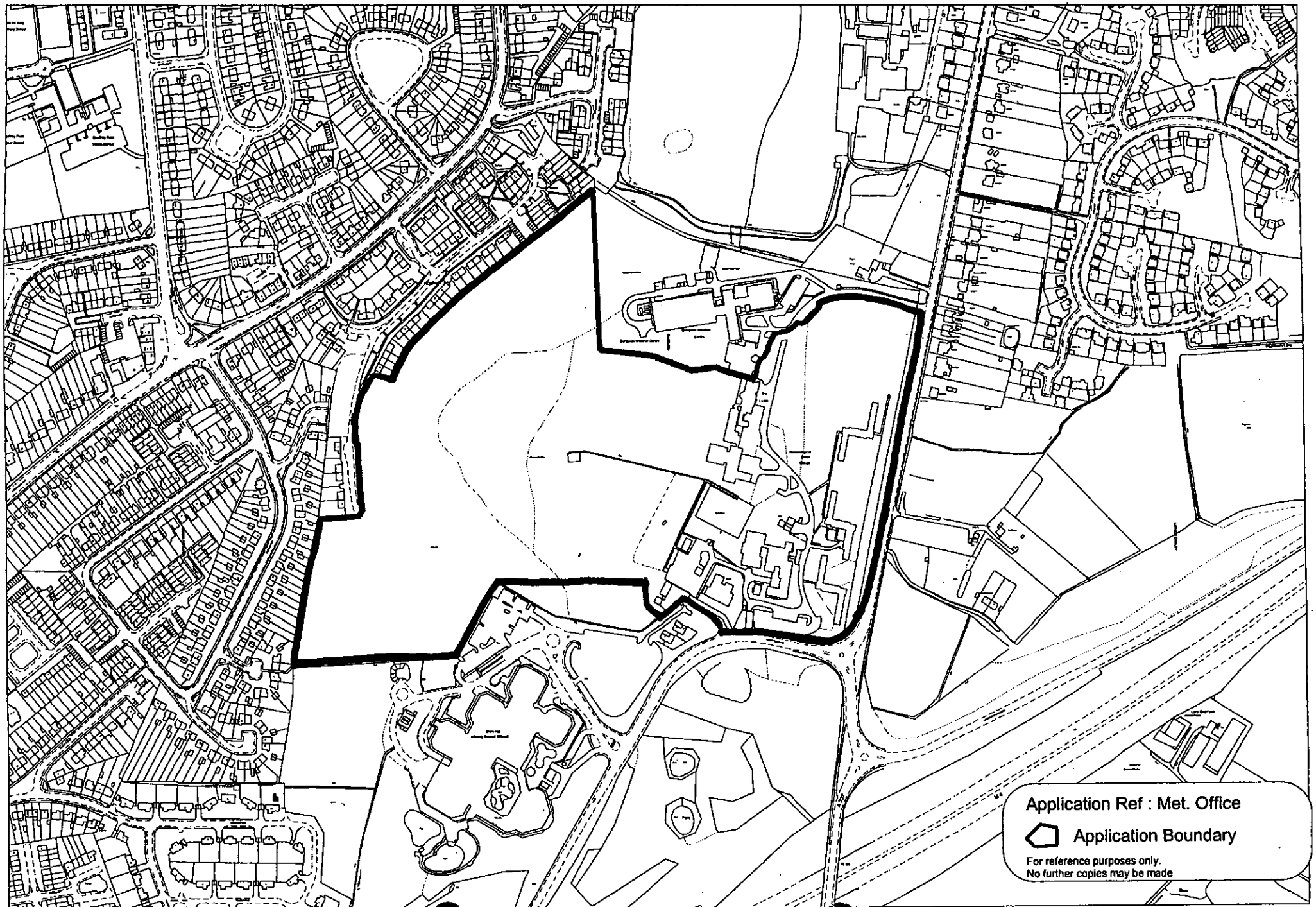
Time Constraints

6.11 As the new accommodation is required by the Met. Office by the end of 2002, observations from WDC are required as soon as possible.

Background Papers	Department Where Held
Planning Application O/2000/1714	Environmental Services

Angela Odell

16.06.00



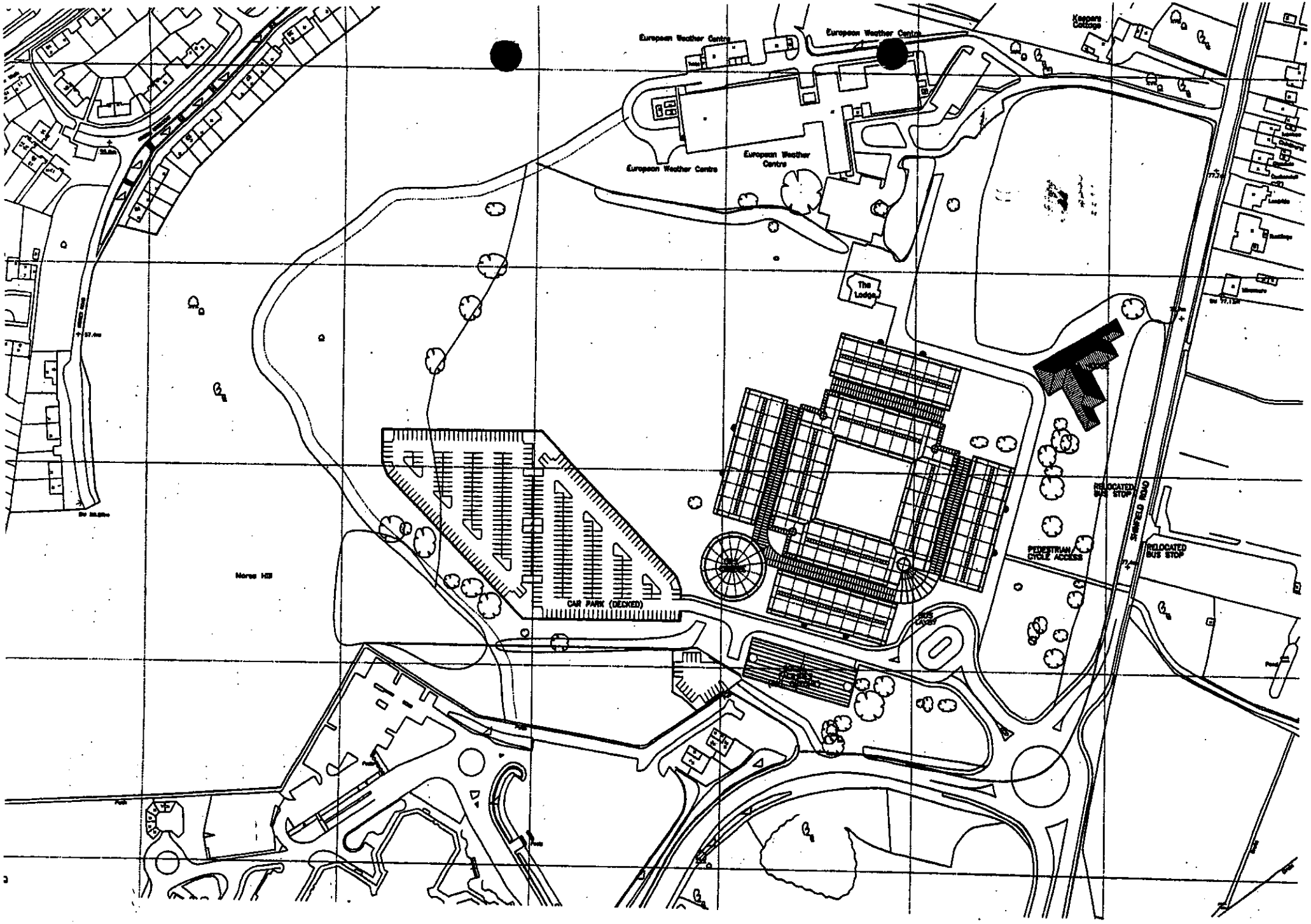
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Surve[illegible]half of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil p[illegible]dings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

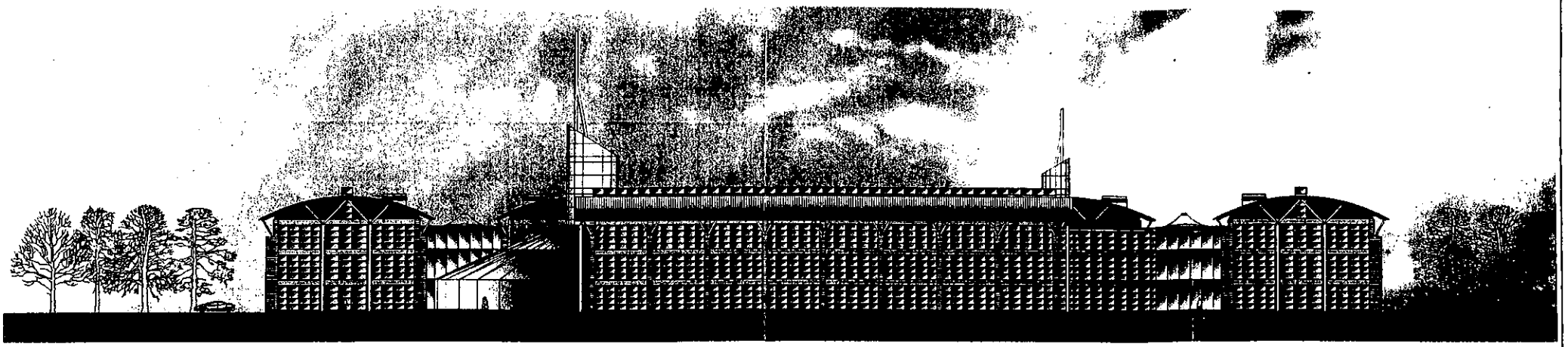
28 June 2000

Scale: 1 : 5000

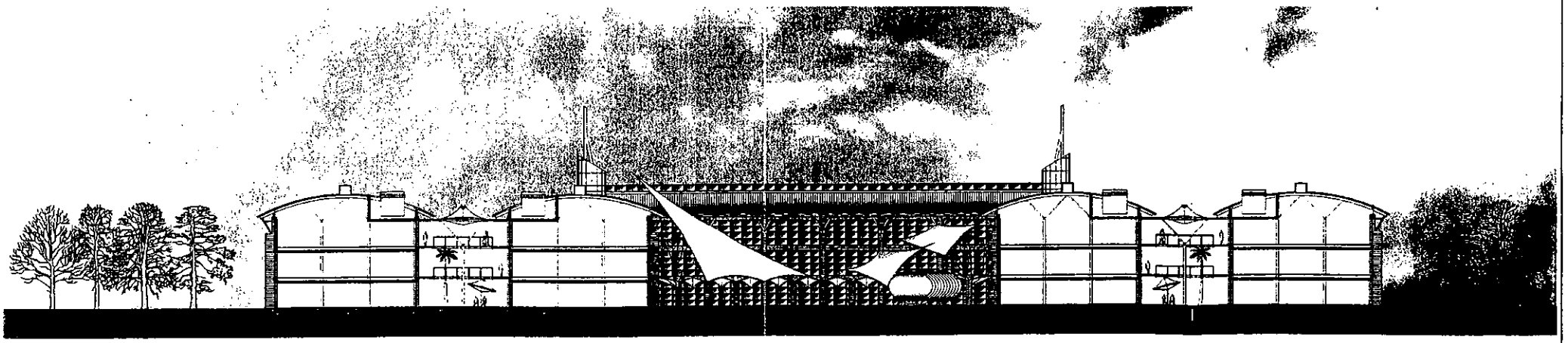
N
W E
S



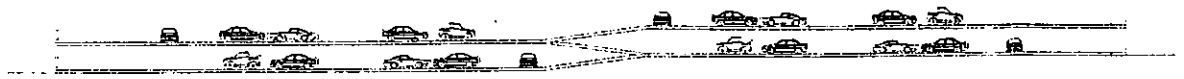
Indicative Plan



Typical elevation main building (east)



Typical section main building (west - east)



Typical section car park (west - east)

Project
Met. Office relocation
Shinfield Park, Reading

Drawing Title
Typical Section & Elevation
Option S4B

Date	Scale	Drawn by
08-05-00	1:250 (A1) 1:500 (A3)	NPB
Project No	Drawing No	Revision
9906	SK008	-

Barton Willmore
Architecture

Architects Master Planners Town Planners
Environmental Consultants Project Services

The Barton Willmore Partnership Reading Limited
Beansheaf Farmhouse Bourne Close
Calcot Reading RG31 7BW
Tel: 0118 943 0000 Fax: 0118 943 0001
e-mail: readingbeansheaf@bartonwillmore.co.uk

Forestry Commission

South East England Conservancy
Alice Holt
Wrecclesham
Farnham
Surrey
GU10 4LF
Tel: 01420 23337
Fax: 01420 22988

Conservator
Alan Betts

Wokingham District Council
Planning Services
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
Berks RG40 1WR

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT
POL	TLS
DC	ENF
APP	
CS	3116
28 JUN 2000	
COPIES TO:	ACK:

26 June 2000

F.A.O. Angela Odel

Our Ref: PLA/019/93/JW-MH

Your Ref: O/2000/1714

Dear Sir/Madam

PLANNING CONSULTATION : **Met Office Training College, Shinfield Park, Reading**

Thank you for consulting the Forestry Commission on this planning application.

This is adjacent to an ancient semi-natural woodland. Would you please note the Forestry Commissions standard statement below.

Please could you inform us of the outcome of this application.

Yours faithfully,

Mike Habergham
Woodland Officer

Ancient woodlands are of great importance and every effort should be made to protect them from damage or loss. These sites have been under woodland for at least the last 400 years and many have links with the original 'wildwood' which once covered most of Britain. As a consequence, ancient woods are often very rich in wildlife, important in the landscape and include archaeological features. Once lost an ancient woodland cannot be recreated.

Wokingham District Council
Planning Application

Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 – Notice under Article 8

AND/OR

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Application No: O/2000/1714

Proposal:
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

Location:
Training College Meteorological Office Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road Shinfield Reading

This application is being advertised in the Reading Chronicle *newspaper on the 30/06/2000 for the following reason(s);*

PROPOSAL IS A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT

PROPOSAL IS WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF A LISTED BUILDING

The application can be inspected at Wokingham District Council's offices during the following times:

PLANNING DEPARTMENT, SHUTE END, WOKINGHAM TEL (0118) 974 6428
8.30 - 5.00 Monday - Thursday & 8.30 - 4.00 Friday

WOODLEY LIBRARY HEADLEY ROAD WOODLEY (9.30am - 7.00pm Mon, Thurs & Fri. 9.30am - 5.00pm Tues, 9.30am - 1.00pm Saturday. closed all day Wednesday)

Comments should be sent in writing QUOTING THE APPLICATION NUMBER to the Case Officer Angela Odell P.O. Box 157 Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1WR to arrive before **21/07/2000** from the date of this notice. Written comments submitted will become available for public inspection.

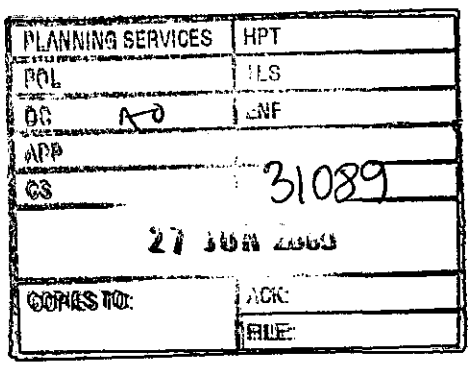
In view of the very large number of planning applications and letters of comment received, it will not be possible for an individual reply to observations made. However any comments will be taken into account when the application is determined and you will be notified of the decision.

Date: 30/06/2000

The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership - Reading
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot,
Reading, RG31 7BW.
Tel 0118 943 0000 Fax 0118 943 0002
e-mail: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

Barton Willmore
Planning

Development Control Manager,
Wokingham District Council,
Environmental Services Department,
Planning Services,
PO Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berks. RG40 1WR



FAO: MS. A. ODELL

BY FAX AND POST
0118 974 6484

9906/A3/WD/SLH

26th June 2000

Dear Sir,

THE MET OFFICE TRAINING COLLEGE, SHINFIELD PARK
PLANNING CONSULTATION NO. 0/02000/1714

We refer to your recent telephone conversation with the writer regarding the above consultation and in particular the future of the Shinfield Players.

The Met Office and ourselves have previously met with representatives of the Shinfield Players to fully explain the proposals for Shinfield Park prior to the formal consultation. Although nothing has been determined to date, in the event of the scheme progressing it would not be possible for the Players to remain in their present building in this important location. The Shinfield Players have expressed a wish to have a building which is under their exclusive control, which rules out the possibility of sharing a Met Office facility on site at Shinfield Park which was initially considered a possibility.

Although the Met Office are clearly not in a position to advise the Shinfield Players of any future course of action, it obviously sees the benefit of the Players relocating to a suitable site in the locality. The Met Office has an interest in supporting the local community and to co-operate with local organisations. With this in mind the Met Office propose to continue to maintain a dialogue as the plans evolve, although they cannot clearly offer any guarantees regarding the future at this stage.

Certificate No. FS 29627

Town Planners • Environmental Consultants
Architects • Master Planners • Project Services

Contact: Gareth Capner, Ian Tant, Roger Turnbull, Mark Sitch

A list of partners can be inspected here and at our associated offices in:
Bristol Cambridge Edinburgh Leeds London West Malling (Kent)

We trust the above information is of assistance to you.

Yours faithfully,

W R Dawes

W.R. DAWES
Senior Planner

21 JUN 2000 See part 1 plans

To:
Harold Sanders
Urban Design And Conservation Officer

From: Angela Odell

Date: 20 June 2000

Application Number: O/2000/1714

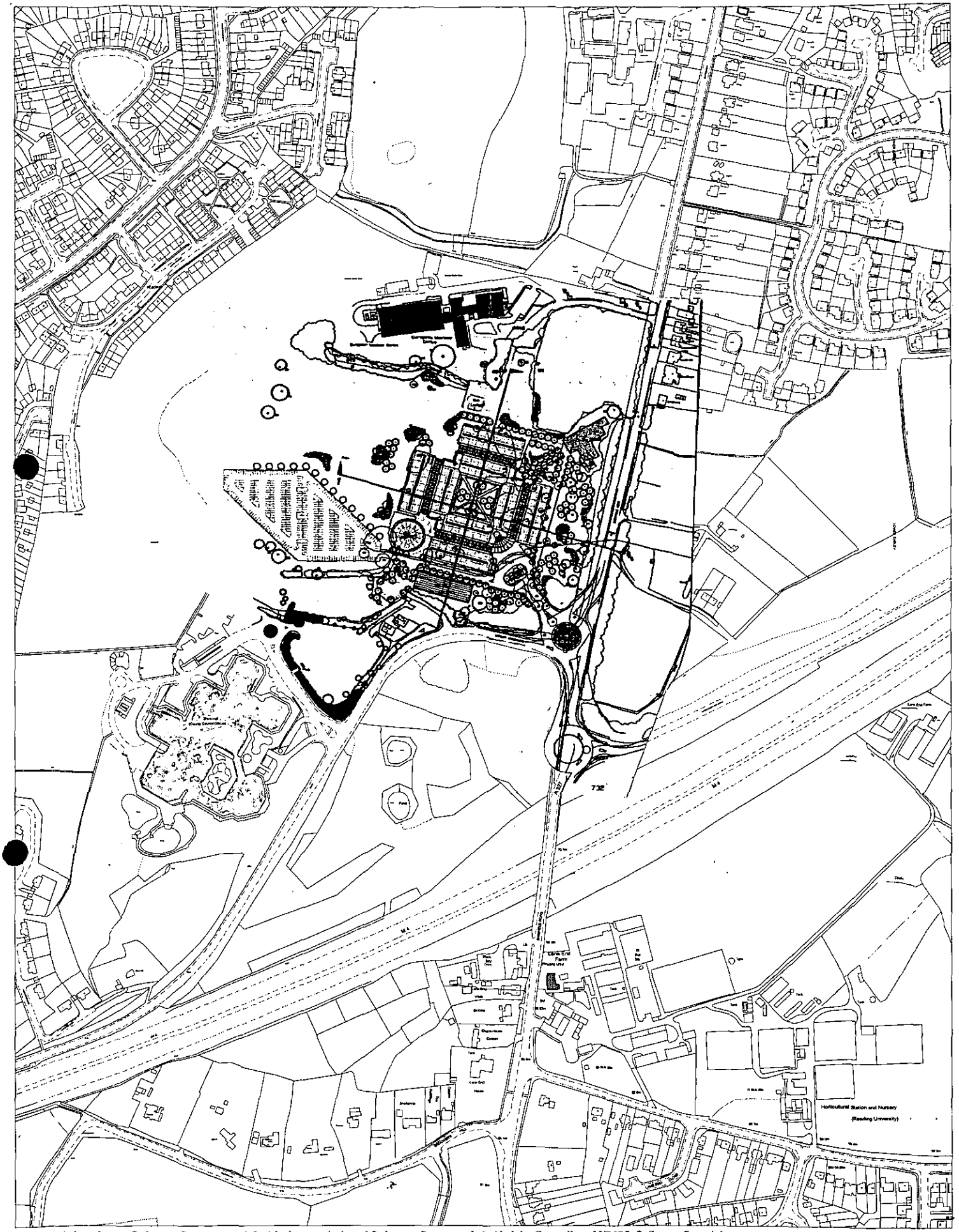
Proposal: Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office..

Site Address:
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.

Applicant:
Ministry Of Defence C/O Barton Wilmore Planning.

Your observations are required in respect of this application within **7 days** of the above date.

See separate comment sheet.



This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

Urban Design Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

22 June 2000 Scale: 1 : 5000

N
W E
S

TO: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FROM: Environmental Design

DATE: 27/06/00

Location:

Training College MET Office Shinfield park Shinfield Road Shinfield Reading

Proposal:

Outline application for the erection of the building for MET office

Application Number: 5/2000/1714

In response to your consultation for the above application, the Conservation/ Design/ Listed Building comments are as follows:

1 Although this proposed building is on Crown land and therefore formal planning or listed building consent will not be required, I am advised by English Heritage that we can expect a similar level of information and consultation as for a listed building application.

2 I am not aware of any discussions concerning the impact of the proposed building on the listed building or its setting. The implications of the removing recent additions should be highlighted and documented now. What is to be left behind? Are there historic records to show the elevations before the alterations and additions were carried out?

3 The proposed training college would have a larger footprint than the adjoining County Hall- see enclosed composite plan

4 If the listed building and its setting is to be acknowledged then the building of this mass and scale should be moved away to the south. Information should be provided now to illustrate the listed building in the context of the proposed training college.

5 The visual impact of the 2-storied carpark also requires further consideration and consultation.

6 If a development of scale is to be supported by this Council I would consider it is essential that further discussions are held with the MOD to reconsider the location of this extensive development, to establish an acceptable relationship between the listed building, the carpark facility and historic parkland.

Harold Sanders

CONSERVATION + DESIGN

21 JUN 2000 See part 1 plans

To:
Harold Sanders
Urban Design And Conservation Officer

From: Angela Odell

Date: 20 June 2000

Application Number: O/2000/1714

Proposal: Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office..

Site Address:
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.

Applicant:
Ministry Of Defence C/O Barton Wilmore Planning.

Your observations are required in respect of this application within **7 days** of the above date.

See separate comment sheet.

TO: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FROM: Environmental Design

DATE: 27/06/00

Location:

Training College MET Office Shinfield park Shinfield Road Shinfield Reading

Proposal:

Outline application for the erection of the building for MET office

Application Number: 5/2000/1714

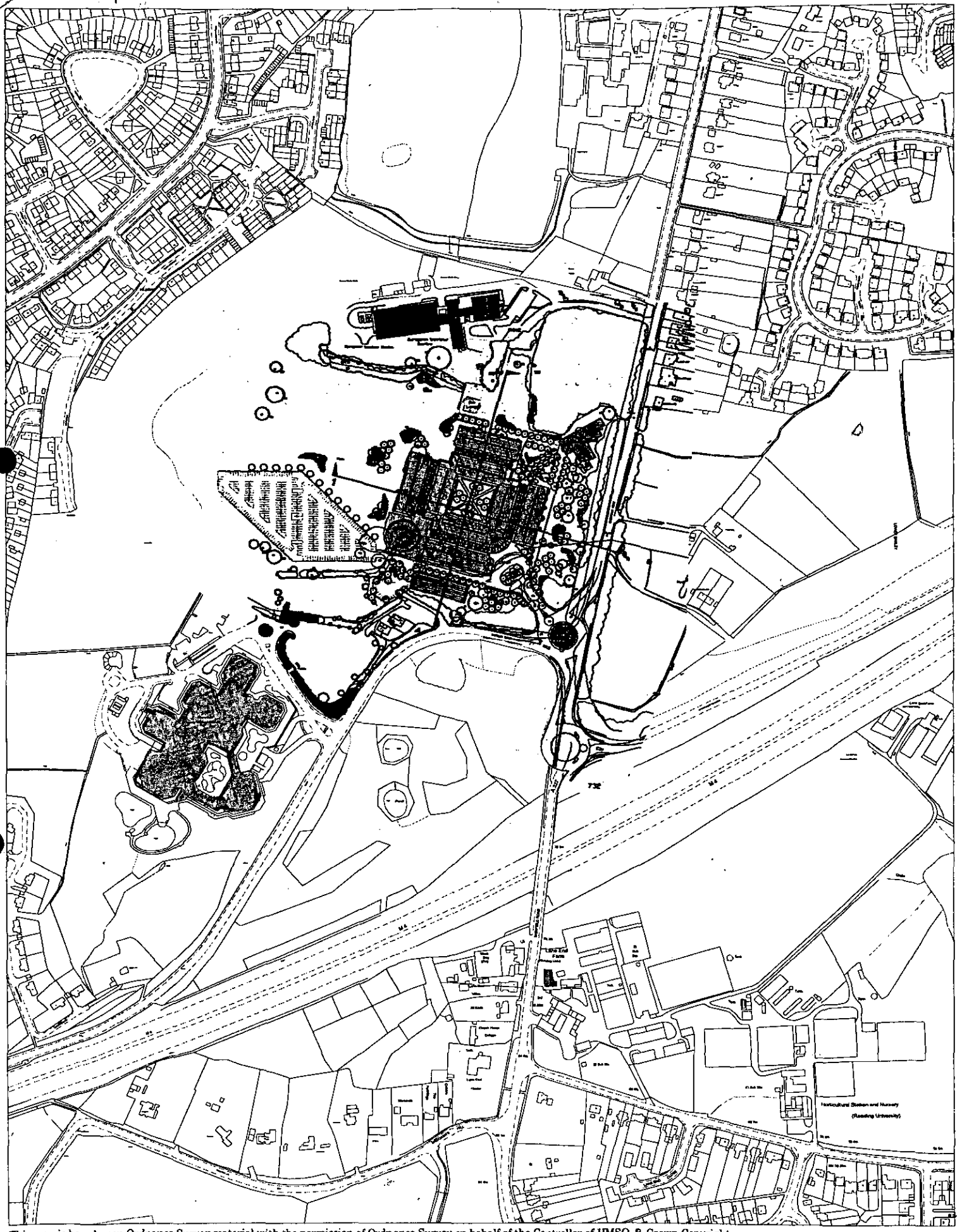
In response to your consultation for the above application, the Conservation/ Design/ Listed Building comments are as follows:

1 Although this proposed building is on Crown land and therefore formal planning or listed building consent will not be required. I am advised by English Heritage that we can expect a similar level of information and consultation as for a listed building application.
2 I am not aware of any discussions concerning the impact of the proposed building on the listed building or its setting. The implications of the removing recent additions should be highlighted and documented now.
3 The proposed training college would have a larger footprint than the adjoining County Hall- see enclosed composite plan
4 If the listed building and its setting is to be acknowledged then the building of this mass and scale should be moved away to the south. Information should be provided now to illustrate the listed building in the context of the proposed training college.
5 The visual impact of the 2-storied carpark also requires further consideration and consultation.
6 If a development of scale is to be supported by this Council I would consider it is essential that further discussions are held with the MOD to reconsider the location of this extensive development, to establish an acceptable relationship between the listed building, the carpark facility and historic parkland.

Harold Sanders

CONSERVATION + DESIGN

27 June 00



This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

Urban Design Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

22 June 2000

Scale: 1 : 5000

N
W E
S

Received by Wokingham District Council

Application No: O/2000/1714

Proposal:
Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office.

Location:
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.

The application is available for inspection at Wokingham District Council's offices during the following times:

PLANNING DEPARTMENT, SHUTE END, WOKINGHAM TEL (0118) 974 6428
8.30 - 5.00 Monday - Thursday & 8.30 - 4.00 Friday

WOODLEY LIBRARY HEADLEY ROAD WOODLEY (9.30am - 7.00pm Mon, Thurs & Fri. 9.30am - 5.00pm Tues, 9.30am - 1.00pm Saturday. closed all day Wednesday). *If you intend to view this application at Woodley Library (see details above) please allow 4 days from the date of this notice for delivery of plans.*

Comments should be sent in writing QUOTING THE APPLICATION NUMBER to the Case Officer Angela Odell P.O. Box 157 Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham Berkshire, RG40 1WR to arrive on or before 14/07/2000. Written comments submitted will become available for public inspection.

In view of the very large number of planning applications and letters of comment received, it will not normally be possible for an individual reply to observations made. However any comments will be taken into account when the application is determined and you will be notified of the decision.

Head Planning and Transportation

20 June 2000

Recd P+P 21/6 See part 1 plans

To:
Policy And Plans Section

30844 5/7 EG.

From: Angela Odell

REPLY REQUIRED

Date: 20 June 2000

Application Number: O/2000/1714

Proposal: Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office..

Site Address:
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.

Applicant:
Ministry Of Defence C/O Barton Wilmore Planning.

Your observations are required in respect of this application within **7 days** of the above date.

Obs for the rear.

- For the purposes of planning policy the MET office should be treated as a local company seeking new premises. Thus the principle of development as an employment policy grants is acceptable provided it does not lead to pressures for additional housing or highway problems. Regarding pressure for housing the Council should be seeking assurances regarding the future use of the entire site within the wider area of Bramhall is there should not be for office development preferably but for housing. There are already transport problems the area - substantial investment would be required to prevent a worsening of these
- The site is within the settlement but according to the adopted LP is only suitable for low density development. This designation together with the SSSI of Urban Landscape Value designation are proposed to be removed as a result of amendments to the WDLP. This suggests that the principle of development is ~~unacceptable~~ acceptable in terms of general location.
- I am satisfied that the site can accomodate the level of development proposed in physical terms but I am concerned that the configuration as shown on the outline drawing will not respect the setting of the listed building because of its scale, height and proximity. The new building should be taken further to the south and possibly also become more to increase the separation of the old and the new. re-orientated. The old building should be relocated. A section through the development that includes the listed building would be helpful as would a photo montage in terms of the skyline when viewed from the south/north.
- Transport issues may well be the determining factor as to the scheme's acceptability.

Sean PP

Tel. 0118 974 6445 (Direct Line)
E-mail: Angela.Odell@wokingham.gov.uk
Date. 26 June, 2000
My ref. AO/O/2000/1714
Your ref. 9906/A3/WD/SLH

Barton Willmore
Beansheaf Farmhouse
Bourne Close
Calcot
READING
RG31 7BW

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 977 8909
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Mr Dawes

APPLICATION O/2000/1714
CONSULTATION UNDER CIRCULAR 18/84
PROPOSED MET OFFICE RELOCTION TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

I refer to the above proposal. I am requesting an extension of time to submit our observations on the above proposal as we are likely to require more than 8 weeks. Please advise me whether this is acceptable.

Meanwhile, if you wish to discuss the matter further please contact me.

Yours sincerely

AO.

MRS A ODELL
Senior Planner

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

From: John Mullaney
Environmental Health

My Ref: JRM

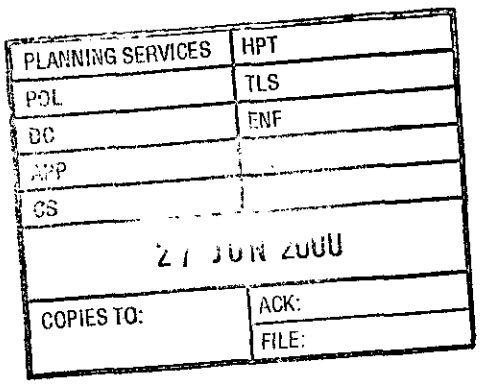
To: Angela Odell
Planning Department

Date: 26/06/00

MET OFFICE COLLEGE, SHINFIELD PARK, WHITLEY WOOD LANE, SHINFIELD. O/2000/1714

With reference to the above application I have no objections or comments to make at this stage.

John Mullaney
Environmental Health Officer



Tel. (0118) 974 6445

Date: 20 June 2000

Your Ref:

My Ref: Angela Odell / O/2000/1714



English Nature
Foxhold House
Thomford Road
Crookham Common
Newbury
Berks

Environmental Services
Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6484
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

PLEASE QUOTE APPLICATION NUMBER WHEN REPLYING

Dear Sir/Madam

Application Number: O/2000/1714

Site Address: Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.

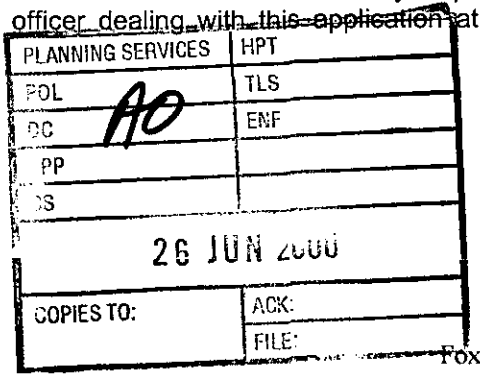
Proposal: Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office..

I enclose details of the above application and would be grateful to receive your observation within **21 days** of the date of this letter. I cannot guarantee that comments received after this date will be taken into account in determining the application.

Please quote reference number **O/2000/1714** in all communications and any response should be addressed to **Angela Odell** the case officer dealing with this application at the above address.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



ENGLISH NATURE

Thames & Chilterns Team
Foxhold House, Crookham Common
Thatcham, Berks RG19 8EL
Tel: 01635 268881 Fax: 01635 268940

To: Angela Odell

Our ref:

Thank you for the attached letter. English Nature does not wish to comment on this consultation.

Signed: Victoria Payne Conservation Officer:

Date: 23 June 00

WOKINGHAM D.C. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

PRE-APP ATTACHED 17.6.

Start date: 09 JUN 2000

Officer: AO | Application No. 0/2000/1714

Map No. 65 Site ~~18~~

Easting: ..... Flood Pln .....

Northing: ..... Mineral .....

Level: ☑ **Sub Committee** ☐ **Delegated** ☐ **Sec. State**

☐ **Incorrect Fee** ☐ **Invalid** ☐ **PD**

Description:
C18/84 OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF BUILDINGS FOR USE AS METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

Location: SHINFIELD PARK SHINFIELD ROAD

Parish: SHINFIELD Ward: Shinfield 20.6.2000

Applicant: MOD

Fee Received ..... Required ..... Additional ..... Refund .....

Enforcement Section to be notified ☐ tick if required

Additional information required for validation

		Reason	Requested	Received
1	1:2500 OS location plan showing property edged in blue/red			
2	1:500 block plan showing existing & proposed dev. + adj. Properties			
3	Forms unsigned			
4	Correct S 66 certificate			
5	Elevation plans			
6	Floor plans			
7	Metric scale disclaimer			
8	Encroachment letter			
9	Miscellaneous			

APPLN NO. _____

ACTION REQUIRED BY DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Conservation Area .....

Listed Building 1 (2) 2*

Advertisement Required ..... Major dev. + ~~adv~~ curtilage of L.B. + Conbury to Dept. PC

Date Site Notice Sent : 20.6.2000 Parish Council Informed - YES / NO

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

Building Control	.....
Landscape	✓
Trees	.....
Conservation Officer	✓
Environmental Health	✓
Housing	.....
Leisure & Cultural services	.....
Public Rights of Way	✓
Property	.....
District Secretary (only if called in by SOS)	.....
Policy & Plans	✓
Strategic Planning (JSPU)	✓
Minerals (BABTIE)	.....
Archaeological Site (BABTIE)	.....
Education	.....
Social Services	✓
Highways	.....

EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

Adjacent D P A	Reading + Bracknell ✓
Adjacent Parish	.....
Southern Electricity Board	.....
British Gas	.....
PSA Oil Pipeline	.....
Transco	.....
Environment Agency	✓
Rail Track	.....
Police Arch. Liaison Officer	.....

HERITAGE BODIES

The Georgian Group	.....
Ancient Monuments Society	.....
Council for British Arch.	.....
RCHME	.....
Telecommunications (NRPB)	.....
Sport England	.....

Pre-app attached

OTHERS:

- Andy Glencross, Diston Pavilion ✓ Phoned to say he would like to see ecological assessment when it is received. (re: ecology / wildlife)
- EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL ✓
- English Nature ✓ (re: Ancient woodlands)
- Forestry Commission
- + Councillors { Fiona Rolls (Chairman of Env. Services) ✓, Liz Siggery ✓, John Green ✓, Alan Spratling ✓

NEIGHBOURS:

4 x S/N + Neighbour consultations as per attached sheet.

Met Office, Shinfield Park.

CONSULTATION SHEET

APPLICATION NO.
0/2000/1714

1859

ADDRESS TO WHICH LETTER SENT	DATE SENT	REPLY RECEIVED (DATE)	APPEAL NOTIFICATIO SENT
European Weather Centre, Shinfield Road	20.6.2000		
Keepers Cottage, Shinfield Road			
20-35 (all) Milford Close, Reading			
42, 44, 46, 21, 23, 25, 27 Wilsford Close			
1 & 2 Whitley Wood Lane			
Foster Wheeler, Shinfield Park (formerly Shire Hall)			
15-71 (odds) Woodside Way			
6-44 (evens) Woodside Way	✓		
1-10 (all) Railton Close			
1-5 (all) Nores Road			
1-12 (all) Regis Close			
1-11 (all), 13-41 (all) Anson Crescent			
1-6 (all) Ash Green			
1-6 (all) Oak Green			
1-12 (all) Wood Green			
St Michaels, Culverdale House, Pendower, Fermain, Ivanhoe, Chinthurst, Glendale, Cushendall, Leodride, Rustlings, Minsmere, Cranborne — Shinfield Road, Shinfield			

The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership - Reading
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot,
Reading, RG31 7BW.
Tel 0118 943 0000 Fax 0118 943 0002
e-mail: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

09 JUN 2000* 1714

Barton Willmore
Planning

Director of Environmental Services,
Wokingham District Council,
PO Box 157,
Council Offices,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berks. RG40 1WR

9906/A3/WD/SLH

8th June 2000

Dear Madam,

PROPOSED MET OFFICE RELOCATION TO SHINFIELD PARK, READING
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1984
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT CIRCULAR 18/84
NOTICE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BY THE MET OFFICE

On behalf of The Met. Office we herewith enclose a consultation under the above Circular relating to the proposed relocation of their headquarters building from Bracknell to Shinfield Park, Reading.

Part IV of the above Act sets out the arrangements by which Government Departments will consult with Local Planning Authorities concerning their proposals for development before proceeding with development which would otherwise require planning permission.

We attach a letter of authority from the Defence Estates dated 26th May 2000 that we may submit such a Notice of Proposed Development on behalf of The Met Office. Under this procedure we seek clearance for the development and not planning permission. At this stage the proposals are in "outline" rather than in "detail", and we seek the Council's views as to the principle of such a development on this site in terms of the quantum of floorspace proposed. Detailed plans have not been prepared, although indicative plans, elevations and cross sections of the building illustrate how such a development might appear on the site.

In support of this consultation we enclose six copies of:

1. A planning statement which includes a design statement;

2. A Landscape Appraisal and Assessment;

3. A Transport Report incorporating procedures for a "Green Transport/Travel Plan".

Certificate No. FS 29837

Town Planners • Environmental Consultants
Architects • Master Planners • Project Services

Contact: Gareth Capner, Ian Tant, Roger Turnbull, Mark Sitch

A list of partners can be inspected here and at our associated offices in:
Bristol Cambridge Edinburgh Leeds London West Malling (Kent)

We would also advise you that the Met. Office are undertaking a similar consultation with Bracknell Forest Borough Council relating to a proposed relocation to Beaufort Park, Bracknell, presently the site of the technical development and instruments division of the Met. Office.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of the proposal in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact either Ian Tant (Planning Partner) or the writer in the first instance.

Yours faithfully,

W.R. Dawes

W.R. DAWES
Senior Planner

DEFENCE ESTATES
Delivering Estate Solutions to Defence Needs

South East & Germany
Blandford House, Farnborough Road
Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2HA
Telephone: Direct dial: 01252 348907
DFTS: (9)4217 3907
Facsimile: 01252 348932
Mil Fax: (9)4217 3932
Stephen Rice BSc FRICS
Manager South East & Germany

code

Mr B Dawes
The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership
Beansheaf Farmhouse
Bourne Close
Calcot
Reading RG31 7BW

Your reference

Our reference 09 JUN 2000 * 1714
DE SE/BRLM/284

Date
26 May 2000

Dear Mr Dawes

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1984 -DOE CIRCULAR 18/84 – NOTICE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ON BEHALF OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE.

Part IV of the above Act sets out the arrangements by which Government Departments will consult Local Planning Authorities about their proposals for development before proceeding with development, which would otherwise require planning permission.

It has been confirmed by the Meteorological Office, who are part of the Ministry of Defence that you have been instructed to issue a Notice of Proposed Development for the construction of a new headquarters office building, student accommodation block, Social facilities building, and associated car parking provision at the Met office site known as Shinfield Park Reading Berkshire. You are hereby authorised to submit the Notice of proposed Development, a copy of which must be sent to this office.

The enclosed copy of this letter must accompany your submission to confirm that you have been authorised to do so by the Ministry of Defence.

Would you please provide me have a copy of the Local Planning Authority's decision in due course, or return this letter of authorisation with an accompanying letter if it is decided not to proceed with the consultation.

Yours sincerely

K M HOWLETT BSc (Hons)
Senior Estate Surveyor (RAF & Met Office Built Estate)
DE (SE&G)

CC: Mr G. Cooper Met Office Relocation Team PD House – Bracknell
CC: Mr K. Scott – (Head of Property & Office Services) Met Office PD House Bracknell

(1) ADDRESS SHINFIELD PARK ~~STATE HALL~~ FOSTER WHEELER ENERGY SHINFIELD ROAD PARISH SHINFIELD E

S.U. 7369 (65)

PLOT No. ORD. SHEET No.

BUILDER

Plan No.	Applicant	Description of Development	Date of Decision	Decision
893/72 -	B.C.C.	New Admin H.Q. ~~5 storey building~~		
312/72	Min Agric, Fisheries & Food	Lab for storing semen	-	
0572 -	Berkshire County Council	Admin. Buildings to form new County H.Q.	14.5.74	N/A C/A
0573 -	" " "	Remainder part site & necessary drainage	16.5.74	N/A C/A
0594 -	" " "	4 staff houses + garages also carports	16.5.74	N/A C/A
~~4881~~	D of E	Computer Complex, office block Conference suite + ancillary accom.		
05529 X	"	add carparking	25.11.76	N/A No copy available A
09102 -	John Laing (Sons) Ltd.	2 name boards illum.	16.2.78	N/A Ref
CR 9862	B.C.C.	2 carriageway names	27.11.78	App N/A
09683 - W/dr.	"	"		
CR 10975	"	2 advertisements & carports	21.9.79	App N/A

DATE OF COMPLETION

MINISTRY DECISION * Appeal - C/Approval (893/72) - 4.12.73

SPECIAL ORDERS

DRAINAGE

(2) ADDRESS SHINFIELD PARK ~~STATE HALL~~ SHINFIELD ROAD PARISH SHINFIELD E

PLOT No. (~~COUNTY H.Qs.~~) ORD. SHEET No. SU. 7369 65

BUILDER

Plan No.	Applicant	Description of Development	Date of Decision	Decision
11601 -	B.C.C.	MAINTENANCE COMPOUND		DP
11804 -	B.C.C.	2 bungalow + carport	28.11.79	N/A C/A
[redacted]12660	B.C.C.	Maintenance Blds	15.1.80	App N/A
13010	"	2 Signs to let for	2.5.80	N/A Ref -
13648	"	Land at The Grove	31.7.80	N/A 31.7.82 TP
GR 1186	"	County H.Qs.	10.11.80	Ref. App N/A
14777	"	Renewal 13648	15.1.81	N/A 31.7.82 TP
15821	"	" 14777	30.7.81	N/A 31.8.82 TP
BR 19179	Thomson Regional Newspapers Ltd.	Internal Offices	11.8.82	App N/A
18124	B.C.C.	Renewal 15821	23.9.82	N/A 31.8.83 TP
BR 19646	"	Alts to Pavilion 'E' + Core 'C'	22.11.82	App N/A
BR 19913	"	" - D (GR Floor)	6.1.83	App N/A

DATE OF COMPLETION

MINISTRY DECISION

SPECIAL ORDERS

DRAINAGE

091074 ~~3~~ 4

(3) SHINFIELD PARK / THE GROVE / ~~SHIRE HALL~~

ADDRESS SHINFIELD ROAD PARISH SHINFIELD

PLOT No. ~~COUNTY HALL~~ ORD. SHEET No.

BUILDER

Plan No.	Applicant	Description of Development	Date of Decision	Decision
20557 -	BCC 3rd FLOOR	Y/P TR. CENTRE & OFFICES	KVRS. 22-12-83	TP 15 yrs.
BR22049	"	INT. ALTS - STORAGE AREAS	30.1.84	APP N/A
BR21844	DIGITAL EQUIP. CO LTD. "	FITTING OUT	27.1.84	APP N/A
21339	BCC	CARPARK AT THE GROVE	24-5-84	N/A TP 31-5-16
BR23240	"	STORAGE AREAS TO OFFICE AREA	8-10-84	APP N/A
BR25189	DIGITAL "	ALTS TO OFFICE AREA (TRAINING AREA COMPUTER ROOM)	13.8.85	APP N/A
21975 -	BCC	PERM. SURFACE CAR-PARK (PREVIOUSLY USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH NEW OFFICES) (ADJ. VISITORS CAR-PARK)	26.2.86	C/A
25618	"	RENEWAL CAR-PARK AT THE GROVE	12.6.86	31.5.88 TP
33034	"	COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE	11.1.89	30 yrs

DATE OF COMPLETION

MINISTRY DECISION

SPECIAL ORDERS

DRAINAGE

091074 37519 " NON-ILL. SIGN 3-5-91 30 yrs

ADDRESS SHINFIELD PARK ~~SHIRE HALL~~ PARISH SHINFIELD

PLOT No. SHINFIELD ROAD ORD. SHEET No. SU. 7369 65

BUILDER

Plan No.	Applicant	Description of Development	Date of Decision	Decision
39584 -	MERCURY COMMS.	MAST / ANTENNA	26.6.92	C/A
41501 -	BCC	REPL. AERIAL MAST	22.10.93	C/A
43839	T.G. OXENBURY NO.1. BUNGALOW - GARDEN SHED		26.1.95	C/A
94/60062/F				
LV(E) 62	COUNTY PROPERTY BERKSHIRE	PAVILLION D - B1 FLOOR-SPACE	11.07.95	A
LV(P) 63	" " "	B1 FLOORSPACE EXCEPT PAVILLION D	11.07.95	R
44826	"	C/U/USE FROM C.C.	(30 yrs) 1.1.97	C/A
~~95/60919/F~~		ADMIN. H.Qs. TO B1 (OFFICES) & ANCILLARY USES		
096/5950	ORANGE	TELECOMM. GB. & ANTENNAE	16.12.96	APP
097/6313	JOSEPH WHEELER ENGROY	ALTERATIONS LOAD 3	6-5-97	APP

DATE OF COMPLETION

MINISTRY DECISION

SPECIAL ORDERS

DRAINAGE

091074

1933
(5) SHINFIELD PARK ~~SHIRE HALL~~ FOSTER WHEELER ENERGY

ADDRESS SHINFIELD ROAD **PARISH** SHINFIELD

PLOT No. **ORD. SHEET No.** SU7369 (65)

BUILDER

Plan No.	Applicant	Description of Development	Date of Decision	Decision
98/67094/A	Foster Wheeler	Erect Ext. Ill. Bus. Sign	24.3.98	C/A
98/67095/A	Foster Wheeler	Erect. Ext. Ill. Logo Sign	24.3.98	REF
CLU(E)62	B.C.C.		11.7.95	APP.
CLU(E)63			"	REF
A/98/0161	TPS	INT. ALTS	14.5.98	APP
FP98/7419	BABTIE	NEW PARTITION WALL ON SECOND FLOOR	11.5.98	APP
98/67964/A	Foster Wheeler Energy	2 Ecct. Ill. Logo Signs	8.10.98	C/A

MINISTRY DECISION

SPECIAL ORDERS P.D Enq - Mr. R. Kockred - 23/7/99 - Planning info.

MET OFFICE RELOCATION
SHINFIELD PARK, READING

THE MET OFFICE

Landscape Appraisal

May 2000

THE MET OFFICE

PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE MET OFFICE TO SHINFIELD PARK, READING

LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

Barton Willmore Environmental,
Beansheaf Farmhouse,
Bourne Close,
Calcot,
Reading, Berkshire
RG31 7BW

Tel: 0118 943 0000
Fax: 0118 943 0003
E-Mail : environmental@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

Ref: BWE/9906/A5/L1/MDC/JEP
Date: 24 May 2000

COPYRIGHT

The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of Barton Willmore Environmental.

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Site Context

3.0 Subject Site Appraisal

4.0 Landscape and Visual Appraisal

5.0 The Development Proposals and Landscape Strategy

6.0 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

7.0 Summary and Conclusions

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Figure 1: Site Context Plan at 1:5000 scale

Figure 2: Site Appraisal Plan at 1:1250 scale

Figure 3: Landscape Proposals Plan at 1:1250 scale

Figure 4: Landscape Sections at 1:500 scale

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 :

- Aerial Photograph of the Site and its Surroundings
- Site Appraisal Photographs
- Site Context Photographs

Appendix 2 : Tree Survey Report prepared by Colin Bashford Associates dated May 2000.

Appendix 3 : Tree Impact Schedule

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Barton Willmore Environmental (BWE) were instructed by The Meteorological Office in March 2000 to advise on the landscape and visual matters relating to their proposal to construct some 37,160 sq m (400,000 sq ft) of new office and college accommodation at the Meteorological Office College at Shinfield Park. At that time, BWE undertook an appraisal of the Subject Site and its surroundings and this report has been prepared to support the consultation for the development under the former Department of the Environment Circular 18/84.

1.2 More specifically, our brief was as follows:-

a) To carry out an appraisal of the Subject Site and its surroundings and to assess the visibility of the site and its relationship with adjacent areas.

b) To advise the architects (Barton Willmore) on the layout of the proposed development on the site in terms of landscape and visual impact constraints, with specific reference to the existing trees and woodlands, the setting of the Grade II Listed Building (The Lodge) and the relationship of the site with adjacent properties.

c) To assess the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development.

d) To give consideration to the development of the site in the context of the relevant environmental policies of the adopted and the emerging Local Plans.

e) To advise on a landscape strategy for the site.

1.3 An appraisal of the site and its surroundings was carried out, including an assessment of the visibility of the site from the surrounding area. Consideration was given to the suitability of the site for the proposed development.

1.4 Information is presented on the following plans appended to this report:-

- Figure 1: Site Context Plan at 1:5,000 scale
- Figure 2: Site Appraisal Plan at 1:1250 scale

- Figure 3: Landscape Proposals Plan at 1:1250 scale
- Figure 4: Landscape Sections at 1:500 scale

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

2.1 The Subject Site, which comprises the Met Office College at Shinfield Park, is located immediately north-east of the Foster Wheeler office development at Shinfield Park and to the south of the European Weather Centre. The site is located to the north of Whitley Wood Lane (B3270) and to the west of Shinfield Road (A327). The Meteorological Office College comprises a number of buildings set within an area of parkland and woodland associated with Nores Hill. To the west are the residential areas of Whitley Wood, and to the east of the site, beyond Shinfield Road, are the extensive residential areas at Lower Earley which occupy land to the north of the M4 motorway. The extent of the Subject Site and its relationship with adjacent development is shown on Figure 1, Site Context Plan at 1:5,000 scale.

2.2 Topographical variation in the area surrounding the Subject Site is quite pronounced, and the major ridgelines and contours are highlighted on Figure 1. The site occupies the central flank of a ridgeline which runs parallel to Shinfield Road (A327). From this ridgeline the land slopes perceptibly westwards towards Whitley Wood, southwards towards the M4 motorway and eastwards towards Lower Earley. Immediately south of the M4 motorway, in the vicinity of the site, the landscape is undulating in nature, with the settlement of Shinfield occupying a minor ridgeline of elevated land which extends from Ryeish Green north-eastwards towards Lane End Farm.

2.3 The natural topography of the locality has been interrupted by the construction of the M4 motorway which passes into deep cutting under the A327 Shinfield Road to the south of the site. To the west of the site, the intersection of the M4 motorway with Basingstoke Road (A33) is formed by a grade separated junction (Junction 11).

2.4 The existing vegetation in the landscape surrounding the Subject Site has been plotted on Figure 1 and this demonstrates that there are a number of significant areas of vegetation present. There are substantial woodland areas and tree belts associated with Shinfield Road (A327), Whitley Wood Lane (B3270) and Nores Hill. The embankments or side slopes to the M4 motorway are covered with semi-mature areas of vegetation,

and the agricultural landscape to the south of the motorway is punctuated by a number of woodlands and copses. The vegetation surrounding the site is an important feature, and effectively controls and curtails views towards and into the site.

2.5 In terms of landscape planning context, on the Proposals Maps of the adopted Local Plan (the Loddon Area Local Plan May 1995) and the emerging Local Plan (the Wokingham District Local Plan Deposit Draft 1997), the Subject Site is included within a defined settlement boundary (Policy LTV 1). In the adopted Local Plan the site is included within an area designated for low density development and which is the subject of Policy LS2. This policy was carried forward to the Deposit Draft Local Plan (Policy WBE20). The explanatory text to the draft policy, as it was then proposed, referred to the character of the area and expressed the Council's wish to see the character of the area maintained and, if possible, enhanced, and that any development proposals should take that aim into account. However, in response to objections to the proposed draft policy, the District Council proposed amendment 4/9 which deleted proposed Policy WBE20 and the supporting paragraphs. In place of Policy WBE20, it was proposed in the April 1999 Amendments to the Plan, that the open land at Shinfield Park to the west of the built development be designated as a Site of Urban Landscape Value (Policy WLL9). This would have afforded protection to open areas within settlements primarily for their landscape value but also for their wildlife and recreational importance.

2.6 However, in response to further objections to part of the area being proposed as an Area of Urban Landscape Value, the designation was removed in the Proposed Additional Amendments dated September 1999, the reason being that the land in question did not meet the criteria for the designation of land as an Area of Urban Landscape Value. The reason given was that there were key visual weaknesses of the landscape value, the lack of public access for recreation or leisure and there were other policy controls in existence.

2.7 As a consequence, the emerging Local Plan proposes no site specific policies for the Subject Site, apart from the wooded area on the scarp slope of Nores Hill to the west which is designated a Wildlife Heritage Site (Policy WN C4).

2.8 As shown on Figure 1, the land to the south-east of Whitley Wood Lane extending southwards towards Shinfield is included within the Green Gap/ Wedge designation and is therefore the subject of proposed Policy WCC2. Although the Subject Site is not

located within the "gap" between Reading and Shinfield, part of proposed Policy WCC2 is relevant to this application as follows:-

> "……
>
> **Existing settlement boundary features such as woodlands, copses and hedgerows should be retained and, where possible, enhanced. Positive management of landscape features that contribute to the separation of settlements will be encouraged.**
>
> **Any development adjoining areas important to the separation of settlements must not undermine those boundary features important to the landscape. ……"**

2.9 A number of the criteria set out in proposed Policy WOS3, Development Control Principles, of the emerging Local Plan, as proposed to be amended, are of relevance as follows:-

> **"The Council will require all development proposals that are acceptable in principle when assessed against other policies of this Plan to:**
>
> **(a) be appropriate in scale of activity and character to the area in which they are located and be integrated into their local context without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers**
>
> **(b) have no significant detrimental impact upon important man-made, landscape and nature conservation features and provide for further landscape treatment where relevant to the type of development and/or the protection of local visual amenity**
>
> **……**
>
> **(f) be of a high quality of design that respects the local context by virtue of siting, layout, massing, materials, colour and texture."**

2.10 The public rights of way in the locality are marked on Figure 1 and this demonstrates that there are a limited number of public paths around the site. Public Footpath No. 10 is located to the south of the Subject Site and extends from Whitley Wood Lane westwards linking to Whitley Wood. To the south of the M4 motorway, an extensive network of public rights of way traverse the landscape around Shinfield. Figure 1 also

demonstrates that the Local Planning Authority have proposed a number of cycle routes within this area, the details of which are set out in the Deposit Draft Local Plan.

2.11 Figure 1 also shows the location of a number of Listed Buildings on and in the vicinity of the site. The Lodge, which is within the Meteorological College site is Grade II listed, and is therefore subject to Policies WHE10 and WHE11 of the Wokingham District Local Plan, which identify the importance of retaining the historic setting of listed buildings. To the south of the M4 motorway, Lane End Farm is a Listed Building and a number of farms within the landscape to the south of the motorway and within the settlements of Shinfield and Spencers Wood are also listed.

3.0 SUBJECT SITE APPRAISAL

3.1 The existing features and layout of the Subject Site are shown on Figure 2, Site Appraisal at 1:1250 scale. This drawing is based on an Ordnance Survey Superplan base, and shows in detail the features on the site including existing vegetation, buildings, areas of car parking, boundary features and buildings and roads in close proximity to the site.

3.2 The Subject Site comprises 17.65 hectares (43.6 acres) of land and contains several buildings associated with the Meteorological teaching college, including The Lodge, a Grade II listed building. The buildings are used for a variety of purposes, including teaching and administration, student accommodation, conference facilities, dining hall, cinema and squash court. Other features on the Site include a tennis court, areas of car parking and internal roads, woodlands, individual mature trees, ornamental landscaping and grassland. As shown on Figure 2, the buildings are predominantly located within the eastern part of the site, and are surrounded by areas of soft landscaping. In the western part of the site, beyond the existing buildings, there is an area of parkland, which provides part of the setting to the listed building (The Lodge). There is an area of mature Ancient Woodland adjacent to the western boundary on the scarp slope of Nores Hill. The northern boundary of the site is defined by woodland and an intermittent tree belt, and this provides separation between the site and the European Weather Centre to the north. The eastern boundary is defined by the woodlands and tree belts flanking Shinfield Road. The southern boundary of the site is formed by the perimeter vegetation along Whitley Wood Lane and The Shinfield Players Theatre. A coniferous tree belt

adjacent to Foster Wheeler's northern car park and the woodland associated with Nores Hill defines the south-western boundary of the site. Access to the site is currently obtained from Whitley Wood Lane (B3270) to the east of the driveway to the Shinfield Players Theatre.

3.3 In terms of topography, the site slopes eastwards and westwards from a ridgeline which coincides with the "parkland" and former cricket field. There is a significant scarp slope to the west of the site associated with Nores Hill. To the south of Stanmore House there is a shallow depression where the footings of South House, which is now demolished, were removed and the ground was subsequently levelled.

3.4 Within the site there are a number of individual mature trees, tree belts, woodlands, groups of trees and areas of ornamental planting, and the extent of these are shown on Figure 2. Colin Bashford Associates, a firm of specialist arboriculturalists, were commissioned in April 2000 to carry out a detailed assessment of the trees on the site. Their report, which is included at Appendix 2, demonstrates that many of the trees on the site are in variable condition, and that some are unsuitable for retention within any scheme of redevelopment on the site. Along the eastern boundary of the site there is a belt of mature trees (G4) some 15 metres in width, comprising ash, beech, silver birch, whitebeam, lime and oak species, with an understorey of elder, elm, hawthorn, laurel and holly species. The north-eastern boundary of the site is defined by a dense mature woodland block (W1), comprising predominantly oak, beech, silver birch and lime species with hawthorn, holly, elm, pine and yew species, and a ground cover of laurel and lilac species. To the west of this woodland there is a gappy tree belt (G13), which extends westwards along the northern boundary and comprises Leyland Cypress species some 7.0 metres in height, and sycamore, cherry and oak species.

3.5 The Ancient Woodland on the scarp slope of Nores Hill defines the western and south-western boundaries of the site. There are several individual mature oak trees to the east of the woodland within the open "parkland" area. A Leyland Cypress tree belt, some 6 metres in height, forms the central section of the southern boundary of the site, and separates the site from car parks to the north of Foster Wheeler's offices. A tree belt (G3), some 8 metres in height, comprising hornbeam, ash, sycamore and hawthorn species forms the eastern section of the southern boundary adjacent to Whitley Wood

Lane. Collectively these tree belts and woodland areas provide both physical and visual separation between the site and the adjacent roads and properties.

3.6 As shown on Figure 2, to the east of Barclay House there are substantial groups of trees and shrubs (G1 and G2) comprising mature individual ash, oak, pine, lime and yew trees up to 20 metres in height. Groups of tree and shrub vegetation are also found to the east of the Dining Hall (G5 and G7), and to the north and south-east of the Lodge (G8 to G11 inclusive). These groups of planting appear to be poorly managed, however they do provide a framework or setting to the existing buildings.

3.7 Mature individual specimen trees are scattered across the site and include oak, ash, lime, cedar, pine and sycamore species. Many of these trees, particularly those between North House and Stanmore House (Trees Nos. 25, 26 and 39 - 47) in the eastern part of the site, Tree No. 4 in the southern part of the site and Tree No. 52 in the northern part of the site, are in fair or good shape and form and contribute to the amenity of the site. A substantial mature specimen oak tree (Tree No. 59) is located within the 'parkland' to the south-west of The Lodge and a Monkey Puzzle tree (Tree No. 53) and substantial Lebanese Cedar tree (Tree No. 54) are found to the north of The Lodge, beyond the subject site. These trees all contribute to the setting of the listed building.

3.8 The Meteorological Office College at Shinfield Park comprises a number of individual buildings in the eastern part of the site. The most important is The Lodge, a Grade II listed building, which comprises a stone faced building with brick walls built in the late 18th century. More recent additions to the original building detract from its visual quality. The setting of the listed building consists of an extensive lawn to the east and the "parkland" to the west.

3.9 Other buildings on the site are more recent and are generally one and two storeys high and are constructed from brick with some rendering to the external walls. Many of the original buildings were built in the 1940's when the site was used by the RAF. However, some of the original structures have subsequently been removed and replaced or renovated. Alexandra House and the Dining Hall are the newest buildings, having been built in the 1990's. North House and Stanmore House have recently been refurbished, and the existing brick walls have been clad with metal panels.

3.10 A number of photographs of the Application Site (A-F inclusive) are included in Appendix 1 of this report. These Site Appraisal Photographs were taken from locations within the site as shown on Figure 2. They serve to demonstrate the character of the site as existing and have been annotated for ease of reference.

4.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL OF THE SUBJECT SITE

4.1 A visual appraisal of the site was carried out and consideration was given to the visibility of the site and the buildings on it in views from the surrounding roads, footpaths and publicly accessible areas. In association with this assessment, consideration was given to the suitability of the site for the development proposed and the effect that this would have on the landscape and visual characteristics of the area. In addition, consideration was given to the appropriateness of developing the site as proposed in the context of the planning policy framework, that is the site's location on the built up edge of Reading adjacent to the Green Gap/Wedge between Reading and Shinfield. A series of photographic panoramas were taken in the area surrounding the site and are included in Appendix 2 to this report. These comprise a number of views taken from the area immediately surrounding the site, including from roads and public rights of way.

Near Distance Views

4.2 There are a limited number of near distance views towards the Subject Site from publicly accessible areas, views into the site only being obtained from a short section of Whitley Wood Lane, where it abuts the southern boundary of the site adjacent to the Shinfield Players Theatre, and from Shinfield Road approaching the junction with Whitley Wood Lane. Views towards the Subject Site from properties on Shinfield Road are curtailed by the woodland area (W1) and tree belt (G4) which defines the eastern boundary of the site. Views towards the Subject Site from the residential areas to the west of Nores Hill are restricted by the extensive woodland area on the scarp slope. Views towards the Subject Site from the residential areas to the south-west of the Site and from Whitley Wood Lane are also restricted by the Foster Wheeler office development at Shinfield Park, which acts as a substantial visual buffer.

4.3 The first of the near distance photographs, **Photograph No. 1** is taken from a location on Whitley Wood Lane opposite the existing access to the Met Office College. The photograph demonstrates the screening provided by the trees which surround the car park in the south-eastern corner of the site, although filtered views are obtained towards the car park. The photograph also shows that the Subject Site is located in close proximity to the Foster Wheeler building at Shinfield Park. This landmark building is a substantial structure over 30 metres in height, and development on the Subject Site would be seen in the context of these offices. The Foster Wheeler building and the existing trees around the perimeter of the car park in the southern part of the site would assist in screening views towards the proposed development from Whitley Wood Lane.

4.4 Moving eastwards along Whitley Wood Lane, **Photograph No. 2** is taken from the junction of Whitley Wood Lane and Shinfield Road looking north-westwards. The photograph demonstrates that none of the existing buildings on the Subject Site are seen, with landscaped banks and timber fencing effectively screening views into the site. As described in later sections, the majority of the perimeter landscaping to the site would be retained and this would provide a setting for the development proposals. However a substantial section of vegetation would need to be removed to accommodate the access proposals into the development, a matter which is dealt with in later sections of this report.

4.5 Moving northwards along Shinfield Road, **Photograph No. 3** is taken from the footpath which flanks Shinfield Road. The photograph illustrates the substantial tree belt (G4) which contains the site on its eastern side. North House, which is a two-storey building located near the eastern boundary of the Site, is visible through a gap in the tree belt along this road. It is intended that this tree belt would be managed and reinforced with further planting and this would provide further screening to the proposed development.

4.6 The last photograph in the sequence of near distant photographs, **Photograph No. 4,** is taken from Public Footpath No. 10 to the south of the Subject Site. Filtered views are obtained across the western and central parts of the Site from this footpath, although views are restricted to some extent by tree and shrub vegetation on either side of the path and by the coniferous tree belt along the southern boundary of the site adjacent to Foster Wheeler's car park. As a consequence most of the Met Office College buildings are not perceptible. Views from this public right of way are dominated by the upper

section of the European Weather Centre, by Foster Wheeler's offices at Shinfield Park and by the extensive hardstandings associated with the car parks. The proposed development would be seen in this context of these existing built forms.

Middle Distance Views

4.7 Consideration was given to middle distance views towards the Subject Site from the surrounding area, including from the woodland area to the south-east of the Subject Site (which is owned by the Forestry Authority) and from the car park to the north of the Black Boy Public House, to the south of the M4 motorway.

4.8 The first in this sequence of photographs, **Photograph No. 5**, is taken from the Forestry Authority's woodland area some 110 metres to the south-east of the Subject Site. Views towards the site are restricted to some extent by intervening topography and by existing vegetation within this area. The photograph demonstrates that the mature trees and tree belt which flank both sides of the southern section of Shinfield Road curtail views towards the Subject Site.

4.9 **Photograph No. 6** is taken from the car park to the north of the Black Boy Public House, some 450 metres to the south of the Subject Site. The photograph demonstrates that the Subject Site is not seen in this view, screening being provided by the vegetation on the cutting slopes to the motorway and by the woodland between the motorway and Whitley Wood Lane. In the left hand side of the photograph Foster Wheeler's office building is a dominant element in the view. Providing that the proposed development comprises a building which is lower in height than the existing Foster Wheeler offices at Shinfield Park, it would have no effect at all on the appearance of the open land between Reading and Shinfield, which is included in the Green Gap/Wedge between these two settlements.

Long Distance Views

4.10 Due to the screening provided by existing woodlands and built forms in the area surrounding the site, there are no longer distance views towards the site. Providing that the proposed development is sensitively designed and set within the existing landscape

framework on the site, it would have no effect on views towards the site from the wider area.

Summary

4.11 The visual appraisal concludes that the Subject Site has a high degree of visual enclosure, which is provided by the woodlands and tree belts on its boundaries and within the surrounding area. The woodland areas associated with Nores Hill provide separation between the site and the residential areas to the west. The substantial tree belt and woodland flanking Shinfield Road are also important in providing screening towards the site from the residential areas to the north and east. In addition the framework of vegetation within the landscape surrounding the site, particularly the Forestry Authority's woodland area to the south-east and the woodland between the M4 motorway and Whitley Wood Lane, controls and curtails views towards the Subject Site. The site and some of the existing buildings on it are seen from a limited number of locations in close proximity to it, including from sections of Whitley Wood Lane, Shinfield Road and Public Footpath No. 10. The limited views into the site are dominated by the European Weather Centre to the north of the site and by Foster Wheeler's offices at Shinfield Park. Development on the Subject Site would be seen in the context of these existing buildings.

4.12 There are no middle distance views towards the existing buildings on the site as the site is screened by the mature vegetation flanking both sides of Shinfield Road and by the woodland areas to the south of Whitley Wood Lane. As a result the proposed development on the Subject Site would have no impact on these views.

4.13 Longer distance views towards the site are dominated by Foster Wheeler's offices at Shinfield Park. This landmark building is a prominent feature in the landscape and is visible from sections of roads and public rights of way surrounding the Subject Site. Whilst the impact of this building diminishes with distance, it is always seen as a skyline feature, set within the substantial wooded areas associated with Nores Hill. Providing that the proposed development is sensitively designed and set within the existing landscape framework on the site, it would have no effect on longer distance views towards the site.

5.0 THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

5.1 The Landscape Proposals Plan, Figure 3, illustrates the proposed development on the Subject Site. This drawing is based on Barton Willmore's Drawing No. 9906/SK007B which illustrates a main headquarters building providing 33,351 sq.m. (359,000 sq.ft.) of office and ancillary systems accommodation. It would comprise four 3-storey pavilion buildings some 15 metres in height, linked by an internal glazed covered walkway, with tensile canopies covering a central courtyard area. The curved roof form, the glazed entrance, the tensile membrane canopies and the provision of a feature tower on the south-eastern corner of the building would ensure that it presents an attractive façade from the approach roads. The 'stepped' corners of the building would provide space for additional feature courtyards. The design of the building would ensure that future users would obtain views of the surrounding landscape, including The Lodge and its parkland setting.

5.2 An operations centre would be located in the south-western corner of the main building and would comprise a 3-storey building with a secure glazed covered walkway linking it to the main building. The elevational treatment of this built form be different to the main building, with its external appearance expressing its internal 'hi-tech' use.

5.3 A building providing residential accommodation would be sited in the north-eastern part of the site, to the south of the retained woodland area (W1). The proposed residential block would comprise a 2-storey building, and would utilise the component parts of Alexandra House which would be removed, providing a building of comparable height.

5.4 A building housing social facilities would be located near the southern boundary of the site, adjacent to Whitley Wood Lane on the site of the Shinfield Players Theatre which would need to be removed. The social facilities unit would comprise a single storey building, and include social and sports facilities, a creché and information centre. A separate car parking area to serve this building would be provided at the end of the track from Whitely Wood Lane, adjacent to Footpath No. 10. The appearance of this building would be enhanced by its landscape framework, comprising existing vegetation and new planting.

5.5 The main car parking area for the proposed development would be located to the north of Foster Wheeler's car parks and comprise a decked structure up to 4.5 metres in height, providing some 750 parking spaces. The decked layout would utilise the natural slope across the site to reduce the overall height of the eastern elevation to about 3.5m. The design of the car park would ensure a modern, secure, open parking environment, with a high level of natural ventilation and daylight. Appropriate landscaping would be provided around the car park, to minimise the visual impact of this structure on the surrounding "parkland" area.

5.6 With regard to external circulation within the site, a road, some 6.0 metres in width, would extend westwards from the new access to the site, along the southern side of the proposed building, and provide access to the car park. A secondary access, some 4.2 metres in width would "wrap around" the eastern and northern edges of the proposed development and provide occasional vehicular access to The Lodge.

5.7 The landscape strategy for the site is shown in more detail on Figure 3. This drawing illustrates a scheme of landscape measures for the site which would result in the enhancement of the natural features on the site which exist at present, and which would provide an attractive setting for the proposed built development. The landscape objectives for the proposals are as follows:

- To retain and protect as much Ancient Woodland, groups of trees and existing good quality individual trees on the site as possible.

- To "contain" the proposed built development within a framework of existing and proposed planting.

- To provide landscape buffers between the proposed built forms on the site and adjacent residential properties and roads. This would ensure that the visual effect of the development on adjacent properties and land uses is minimised.

- To provide a high quality landscape setting to the proposed development through the provision of a robust landscape infrastructure, incorporating the use of appropriate hard landscape features.

5.8 The layout on Figure 3 would result in the retention of the remnant Ancient Woodland in the western part of the site, the woodland in the north-eastern part of the site and the majority of the tree belt flanking Shinfield Road. A substantial number of the existing mature individual trees on the site would need to be removed to accommodate the built development. However, the arboricultural survey demonstrates that many of these trees are in variable condition and have limited amenity value.

5.9 The majority of the existing mature trees, tree belts and areas of woodland along the boundaries of the site would be retained and these would provide a framework for the proposed built development. The most important trees in terms of their visual amenity and screening function along the eastern boundary of the site would be retained, as would the majority of the mature individual trees within the parkland to the west of the listed building, The Lodge. However, a number of mature trees and groups of trees and shrubs in the "parkland" area and in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the site would need to be removed to accommodate the proposed built development, the car parks and the access arrangements into the site.

5.10 It is proposed that new tree planting would be introduced to off-set the loss of a number of existing trees. Advanced nursery stock trees (up to 5.0 metres in height) would be planted in groups in the grassland surrounding the proposed development and this planting would ensure the "parkland" character of the site is maintained. The tree planting would also provide a succession of tree cover to follow on from the mature and over-mature trees which exist on site at present. Nursery stock trees (up to 3.0 metres in height) and ornamental shrubs would be planted within the courtyards associated with the building. A belt of woodland mix planting comprising standards up to 3.0 metres in height at the time of planting, and whips and feathered trees up to 1.8 metres in height, would be introduced in the south-eastern part of the site adjacent to the new access arrangements into the site between the social facilities building and Tree Group (G4). This planting would provide a landscape buffer to views into the site when approaching the junction of Whitley Wood Lane and Shinfield Road. A belt of woodland mix planting would also be introduced to "wrap around" the proposed car park and assist in assimilating it into the existing parkland.

5.11 A tree belt, comprising advanced nursery stock trees, would be planted to the south of The Lodge, adjacent to the access road which runs along the northern edge of the

proposed office building. This planting would "contain" the setting of The Lodge and provide some visual and physical separation between The Lodge and the proposed development. Additional planting would be introduced along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site to complement the existing structure of vegetation which exists at present, and to provide separation between the proposed development and Shinfield Road, Whitley Wood Lane and Foster Wheeler's northern car park. This planting would provide screening below the existing retained trees to ensure a succession of tree cover as the planting matures. This planting and the retained tree belt would provide an appropriate interface between development on the site and the residential properties on the eastern side of Shinfield Road. The "parkland" character of the Site would also be reinforced by providing drifts of bulb planting in the grassland areas surrounding the development. New planting would comprise indigenous species found in the woodland and tree groups on and adjacent to the site. This planting would complement the existing tree cover in the locality and provide nature conservation interest.

5.12 The majority of existing trees would be improved through a programme of selective tree surgery work to ensure their long term survival and health. The implementation of the landscape proposals shown on Figure 3 would result in the attractive and well-designed building being set within a framework of existing trees, woodland, parkland and new planting. A Landscape Management Plan would be developed for the Site including the ancient woodland in consultation with the Local Planning Authority so that an appropriate landscape management regime is in place on the site.

5.13 Two Landscape Sections have been prepared to demonstrate the relationship between the proposed development on the Subject Site and adjacent areas and how the existing boundary vegetation and new planting would provide an attractive setting and landscape framework to the new development. The location of the Sections are shown on Figure 4.

5.14 The Sections on Figure 4 demonstrate that the existing tree belt and woodland along Shinfield Road would continue to screen views into the site, and as a result only the upper sections of the building would be seen. New planting adjacent to Whitley Wood Lane and along the central section of the southern boundary of the site would assist in curtailing views towards the social facilities building and the car park. As the proposed and existing trees mature and gain stature, views towards the proposed built forms

would be more effectively curtailed and long term benefit would be gained from the additional planting proposed as part of the development.

5.15 Lighting columns and fittings chosen to prevent excessive light pollution at night and concealed lighting from the car park, would spill out beyond the proposed office building line. This, combined with the lighting from the office building, should provide enough illumination for pedestrian thoroughfare. However, it is suggested that localised low level bollard lighting positioned in strategic hard and soft landscaped areas could also be proposed. In any event, the lighting of the proposed building would be seen in the context of the existing lighting from the adjacent Foster Wheelers offices and from the lighting along Whitley Wood Lane and Shinfield Road. The existing planting which surrounds and contains the Site and the new planting would act as visual screens or "curtains", ensuring that the lighting to the building and car park would not "spill out" into the adjacent areas.

6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 In this section of the report, consideration is given to the effects of the proposed development in terms of the impact on landscape features and landscape character, as well as assessing the visual impact of the proposals. As described in the previous paragraphs, the Subject Site is located in close proximity to the existing Foster Wheeler building at Shinfield Park and the European Weather Centre. Development on the site as proposed would be seen in the context of these adjacent buildings, and it would not encroach into the open land between Reading and Shinfield, which provides a Green Gap or Wedge between these settlements, neither would it impact on the wider countryside to the south of the M4 motorway. Development on the site would take place within an existing landscape structure on land which is currently occupied by an extensive footprint of built forms.

Impact on Existing Vegetation

6.2 As set out in Section 3.0 of this report, there are a number of existing individual trees and groups of trees on the site, and a number of these would need to be removed to accommodate the proposed built development, the access arrangements to the site and the car parks. As set out in the report prepared by Colin Bashford Associates Limited, a

number of these trees are in variable or deteriorating condition, and some are unsuitable for retention within any scheme of redevelopment on the site. During the design process, detailed consideration was given to the alignment of the access arrangements and internal roads and the layout of the proposed buildings, in order to minimise the impact of these built structures on the existing tree population. However, in order to accommodate any form of redevelopment on the site, it is inevitable that there would be some tree loss. The most significant individual trees on the site are those in the grassland between North House and Stanmore House, including Tree Nos. 25, 26, 39 – 41 and 43 (all English oaks), Tree No. 4 (English oak) on the southern boundary adjacent to Whitley Wood Lane, and Tree No. 52 (Cedar Deodar) to the north of The Lodge, all of which are in reasonable condition and would be retained. The remnant Ancient Woodland and associated trees on the scarp slope of Nores Hill to the west of the site, (Tree Group G14 and Tree Nos. 60 - 69 - English oaks), would all be retained and would continue to provide a screen between the development and the residential areas of Whitley Wood. Woodland W1 and the majority of Tree Group G4 on the eastern boundary of the site, would also be retained and continue to provide a screen between the development and the properties on Shinfield Road.

6.3 The details of individual trees and groups of trees that would be lost as a result of the development proposals are set out in the Tree Impact Schedule contained in Appendix 3 to this report. The Arboricultural Survey also identifies that there are a number of dead, dying or hazardous trees on the site (including Trees Nos. 31, 32, 57 and 73).

6.4 Table 1 below identifies the total number of individual trees that would need to be removed and the percentage loss of vegetation within planting groups that would result from the development proposals.

Table 1 : Summary of Impact on Trees/Woodlands

Individual Trees to be removed	**Individual Trees to be retained**
Total 40 No. including 18 No. significant trees (in terms of their size, condition and amenity value) and 4 No. (recommended to fell).	Total 40 No. including 21 No. significant trees (in terms of their size, condition and amenity value).
Groups of Trees to be removed (%)	**Groups of trees and woodland trees to be retained (%)**
G1, G2, G5, G6, G7, G8, G10 G11, G16, G17, G18 100 G3 50 G4 15 G15 10	G9, G12, G13, G14, W1 100

Visual Impact

6.6 The proposed development on the Subject Site, as shown on Barton Willmore's Drawing Nos. 9906/SK007B to 9906/SK008 inclusive, would affect the views from a number of locations as follows:-

- **Photograph No. 1**: The proposed social facilities building and main headquarters office development would be seen from this section of Whitley Wood Lane. However existing vegetation, supplemented by new planting, would assist in "softening" the views towards the buildings from this location, particularly in the longer term. The Shinfield Players Theatre and parts of the existing buildings on the site are currently visible in the view from this location. The proposed development would also be seen in the context of the existing Foster Wheeler building seen in the left hand side of the photograph. It is considered that the visual impact of the development would be quite significant at Year 1, but this impact would reduce as the new planting matures, say within 10 – 15 years.

- **Photograph No. 2:** The proposed development would be seen from this viewpoint as the proposed access arrangements into the site would "open up" views into the site from the Shinfield Road/Whitley Road junction. However, the development would still be contained to some extent by the existing trees and woodlands within and surrounding the site, particularly the tree belts along the southern and eastern boundaries. New planting to be introduced on either side of the proposed access arrangements would assist in curtailing views towards the development from this viewpoint in the longer term. The lower part of the main building and the car parking would be screened by the vegetation around the perimeter of the site and by the planting associated with Foster Wheeler's land.

- **Photograph No. 3:** On the approach to the junction of Whitley Wood Lane and Shinfield Road from the north, views towards the proposed development would be substantially curtailed by the existing tree belt flanking Shinfield Road. Glimpsed views would be obtained towards the new development through gaps in this vegetation. However it is proposed that the existing tree belt would be supplemented with further planting and as a result, in the longer term, the proposed development would not be readily perceptible due to the screening effect of intervening vegetation.

- **Photograph No. 4:** Views towards the proposed decked car park in the south-western part of the site would be partially curtailed by the existing conifer tree belt which currently assists in separating the site from Foster Wheeler's northern car park. New planting, comprising a belt of woodland planting some 15 – 20 metres in width, would be provided along the central section of the southern boundary of the site and around the proposed car park, and as it matures this would further screen views towards the proposed development. The planting which surrounds Foster Wheeler's southern car park and which flanks Whitley Wood Lane would also assist in curtailing views towards the proposed development, and as a result its impact on the views from Whitley Wood Lane would be fairly limited.

- **Photograph No. 5** The tree and shrub vegetation flanking Shinfield Road would restrict views towards the proposed development and as a result its impact on the views from the Forestry Authority woodland area would be insignificant.

- **Photograph No. 6:** The proposed development, would not be readily perceptible from the Black Boy car park as the semi-mature vegetation associated with the motorway embankment and the vegetation along Whitley Wood Lane would screen views towards the new built forms. As a result the impact of the development on longer distance views would be negligible, if any.

6.7 Consideration has been given to the development proposals for the site in the context of the environmental policies contained in the emerging Local Plan, most specifically Policy WCC 2 which considers the impact of development adjoining areas included within the Green Gap/Wedge designation. As set out in paragraph 2.8 of this report, part of Policy WCC 2 is relevant to this consultation. Development on the Subject Site would have no impact on the boundary features such as woodland or other vegetation which define the existing settlement in this locality. Consideration has been given to the criteria set out in Proposed Policy WOS 3, as follows:-

- The proposed development would be appropriate in scale and character to the local area as the design of the new building has been carefully considered to ensure that it would sit comfortably within the site. In addition, due to the extensive woodland areas and tree belts surrounding the Subject Site, there would be no adverse impact on adjoining properties. As a result the proposed development would be integrated into its local context without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

- The proposed development would not have a significant detrimental impact upon important man-made, landscape and nature conservation features, although a number of existing mature trees and groups of trees would be lost to the development. The development would take place within the established landscape framework to the site, which would be enhanced by additional planting. The design of the building would be high quality and would respect the local context by virtue of its siting, layout, massing, materials, colour and texture.

The attractive design of the building would ensure the protection of local visual amenity.

6.8 With regard to the listed building on the site, the recent additions to the original building which detract from its visual quality would be removed as part of the development proposals. As mentioned in paragraph 5.11, the setting of the listed building would be demarcated by providing a tree belt to the south of The Lodge, and this would provide some visual and physical separation between The Lodge and the proposed development. The tree belt would assist in defining the setting of The Lodge, and the open character of the lawns to the east and the 'parkland' to the west of this listed building would be substantially retained.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Subject Site, which comprises the Met Office College at Shinfield Park, is located immediately north-east of the Foster Wheeler office development and to the south of the European Weather Centre. The Meteorological Office College comprises a number of buildings set within an area of "parkland" and woodland associated with Nores Hill, to the west of which are the residential areas of Whitley Wood. To the east of the site, beyond Shinfield Road, are the residential areas at Lower Earley which occupy land to the north of the M4 motorway.

7.2 The site occupies the central flank of a ridgeline which runs parallel to the A327. Immediately south of the M4 motorway, in the vicinity of the site, the landscape is undulating in nature with the settlement of Shinfield occupying a ridgeline of elevated land. There are a number of significant areas of vegetation present in the locality, including the substantial woodland areas and tree belts associated with Shinfield Road (A327), Whitley Wood Lane (B3270) and Nores Hill. The embankments or side slopes to the M4 motorway are covered with semi-mature areas of vegetation, and the agricultural landscape to the south of the motorway is punctuated by a number of woodland and copses.

7.3 As shown on Figure 1, the land to the south-east of Whitley Wood Lane, extending southwards towards Shinfield, is included within the Green Gap/Wedge designation and is therefore the subject of proposed Policy WCC 2 of the emerging Local Plan. Part of proposed Policy WCC 2, which considers development adjoining areas important to the

separation of settlements, is relevant to this application. In addition, a number of the criteria set out in proposed Policy WOS 3 of the emerging Local Plan are of relevance as these seek that all development proposals should be appropriate in scale and character to the area in which they are located, have no significant detrimental impact upon important man-made, landscape and nature conservation features and they should be of a high quality of design that respects the local context.

7.4 The Subject Site comprises 17.65 hectares (43.6 acres) of land and contains several buildings associated with the Meteorological teaching college, including The Lodge, a Grade II Listed Building. These buildings are predominantly sited within the eastern part of the site. Other features include a tennis court, areas of car parking and internal roads, woodlands, individual mature trees, ornamental landscaping and grassland. Within the western part of the site, beyond the existing buildings, there is an area of parkland which provides part of the setting to the listed building (The Lodge), beyond which there is an area of Ancient Woodland on the scarp slope of Nores Hill.

7.5 The visual appraisal demonstrates that the Subject Site has a high degree of visual enclosure, which is provided by the woodlands and tree belts on its boundaries and within the surrounding area. The woodland areas associated with Nores Hill provide separation between the site and the residential areas to the west. The substantial tree belt and woodland flanking both sides of Shinfield Road are also important in providing screening towards the site from the residential areas to the north and east. In addition, the framework of vegetation within the landscape surrounding the site, particularly the Forestry Authority's woodland area to the south-east and the woodland between the M4 motorway and Whitley Wood Lane, controls and curtails views towards the Subject Site. The site and some of the existing buildings on it are seen from a limited number of locations in close proximity to it, although local views towards the site are dominated by the mature perimeter vegetation and by the European Weather Centre to the north of the site, and Foster Wheeler's offices at Shinfield Park, which form a prominent landmark feature within the landscape in this locality. Middle distance views towards the site are screened by the mature vegetation flanking both sides of Shinfield Road and by the woodland areas to the south of Whitley Wood Lane. Longer distance views towards the site are dominated by Foster Wheeler's offices at Shinfield Park and the buildings on the Met Office site are screened from view. Providing that the proposed development is

sensitively designed and set within the existing landscape framework on the site, it would have no effect on views towards the site from the wider area.

7.6 The majority of existing mature trees, tree belts and areas of woodland along the boundaries of the site would be retained and these would provide a framework for the proposed built development. The most important trees, in terms of their visual amenity and screening function, along the eastern boundary of the site would be retained, as would the mature individual trees within the "parkland" to the west of the listed building, The Lodge. However, a number of mature trees and tree groups in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the site would need to be removed to accommodate the proposed built development, the car parks and the access arrangements into the site. However, the arboricultural report identifies that a number of these trees are in variable or poor condition.

7.7 The proposed development on the Subject Site would affect the views from a number of locations. In local views towards the site, the proposed development would be seen in the context of the existing Foster Wheeler offices and the European Weather Centre. The proposed planting within the site and on the boundaries of the site would provide an appropriate setting for the new building. The lower part of the main building and the decked car parking would be substantially screened by existing woodland and trees around the perimeter of the development area and by new landscaping. As shown on Figure 3 the proposed building would be designed to sit comfortably within the existing landscape framework. As a result, the proposed development would not look out of place or discordant within its landscape setting. In middle distance views towards the Subject Site, including from the Forestry Authority's woodland area to the south-east and across the M4 motorway, the proposed development would not be visible beyond the mature vegetation flanking both sides of Shinfield Road, the semi-mature vegetation associated with the motorway embankment and the vegetation along Whitley Wood Lane. The proposed development would not be perceptible in longer distance views due to the screening provided by the mature vegetation surrounding the Subject Site.

7.8 Consideration has been given to the development proposals for the site in the context of the environmental policies contained in the emerging Local Plan, most specifically Policy WCC 2 which considers the impact of development adjoining areas included within the Green Gap/Wedge designation. Development on the Subject Site would have no impact

on the boundary features, such as woodland or other vegetation which define the existing settlement in this locality. The proposed development would also accord with the criteria set out in proposed Policy WOS 3 by being appropriate in scale and character to the local area and integrating into the local context without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers, due to the extensive woodland areas and tree belts surrounding the Subject Site. In addition, the setting of The Lodge would be retained by removing the recent additions which detract from its visual quality and providing a tree belt to the south, visually separating The Lodge from the proposed development. The tree belt would provide containment to the setting of The Lodge and maintain the character of the extensive lawn to the east and the 'parkland' to the west.

7.9 In summary, the proposed development on the Subject Site would be assimilated into the existing landscape setting and would accord with the environmental policies set out in the emerging Local Plan. Although the development would comprise a substantial main building, two ancillary buildings and associated car parking, it would "sit" comfortably within the existing landscape framework, and would be perceived in the context of Foster Wheeler's offices and the European Weather Centre at Shinfield Park.

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

APPENDIX 1

Aerial Photograph of the Site and its Surroundings

- **Site Appraisal Photographs**
- **Site Context Photographs**

APPENDIX 2

Tree Survey Report prepared by Colin Bashford Associates dated May 2000

Barton Willmore
Environmental

Met. Office
Shinfield
Reading

Tree Survey

The Brewery, High Street, Twyford, Hampshire SO21 1RG Tel 01962 715407 Fax 01962 711419

May 2000

COLIN BASHFORD ASSOCIATES LIMITED

TREE SURVEY NOTES/GENERAL

- The attached survey has been carried out within the guide-lines set by British Standards and current good arboricultural practice.
- Where instructed trees have been numbered for identification on site, with small durable metal or plastic tags.
- Due to variations of existing ground levels throughout the site, height dimensions are estimated and are given in metres. Accurate heights, measure with optical instruments can be provided where instructed.
- Trunk diameters are taken at 1.5 metres above ground level ("breast height") and are given in millimetres. Trees that are multi-stemmed below this height are indicated, with individual trunk diameters given, or average diameters shown with "Av" following the measurement.
- Branch, canopy and crown spreads, given in metres are assessed radially from the centre of the trunk system, to the main living lateral branch tips and are defined by the principal compass points.
- The assessment of a tree's age classification is made in terms of its site specific maturity in the landscape taking into account its overall shape and form in that setting.

Age groups are indicated as:-	`Y	=	young trees
	MA	=	middle age trees
	M	=	mature trees
	OM	=	over mature
Vigour is indicated as:-	N	=	normal vigour
	L	=	low vigour
	-	=	dead or moribund

Assessment and Category Classification

The species and condition of all trees included in the survey have been assessed by a person qualified and experienced in arboriculture. In making the assessment particular consideration has been given to:-

1) the height, diameter and crownspread of each tree;
2) the health, age, vigour and condition of each tree;
3) any structural defects in each tree, and its life expectancy;
4) the location of each tree relative to existing site and surrounding features;
5) the landscape or environmental value of individual trees, groups or woodlands.

This assessment has not considered any specific proposed development on the site, but will have noted and accounted for any changes on or off site that have an effect on the accustomed conditions around the trees surveyed.

On the basis of this assessment, the trees are classified into one of the following categories or intermediates thereof in the survey list, and are differentiated on plans by colours as indicated.

A	trees in prime condition whose retention is most desirable and reasonable **High Category - (Green)**
A/B	mid-grade trees which may require tree surgery work to render them safe and healthy and possibly raise them to the higher category. **High/Moderate Category - (Green/Blue)**
B	trees in moderate condition where retention is desirable and reasonable **Moderate Category - (Blue)**
B/C	mid-grade trees which may require tree surgery work to render them safe and healthy, and possibly raise them to the higher category. **Moderate/Low Category - (Blue/Brown)**
C	trees that are of only average condition which could be retained but are likely to require tree surgery works to render them safe and healthy. **Low Category - (Brown)**
C/D	trees which are of very poor shape and form and are beyond corrective tree surgery **Fell Category - (Brown/Red)**
D	trees for removal because they are dead; diseased; dying; decayed or dangerous. **Fell Category - (Red)**

Clients are reminded that the above assessment is not intended as a schedule or specification of work to be carried out. It is however a qualified report on the condition of the trees inspected and a guide to the work that might be undertaken by a prudent owner.

COLIN BASHFORD ASSOCIATES

TREE SURVEY

Client: Barton Willmore Environmental

Site: Met Office College, Shinfield, Reading Surveyor/s: N Collins *HND.Arb*

Date of Survey: 3rd May 2000 Weather: Overcast, slight drizzle, light winds.

Tagged - NO

No	Species	H't	Radius	T/Di	Age	Vig	Cat	Comments
1	Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*	13	N 5 E 6 S 5 W 5	Av 300	M	N	B	Multi stemmed at ground level, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, old pruning wounds, previously crown reduced on North side, minor deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
2	English Oak *Quercus robur*	14	N 5 E 3 S 7 W 5	600	M	N	B/C	Low hanging branches, crown shape distorted and trunk shape distorted due to group pressure and weighted Southwest, major deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
3	Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*	7	N 6 E 5 S 2 W 4	320	MA	L	C	Old pruning wounds, bifurcated at 1.5m, crown shape distorted and trunk shape distorted due to group pressure, minor deadwood, low crown density, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
4	English Oak *Quercus robur*	14	N 8 E 7 S 7 W 8	730	M	N	A/B	Low hanging branches, major deadwood, excellent shape and from, tarmac approximately 1.5m to North and 2.5m to South from main trunk. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
5	Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*	7	N 3 E 3.5 S 2.5 W 4	330	MA	N	C	Basal suckers, old pruning wounds with minor decay, minor deadwood, tarmac approximately 2m to South and 1m to West, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
6	Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*	13	N 5 E 4 S 5 W 6	330 300 270	M	N	C	Basal decay, trifurcated at 0.5m, crown shape distorted due to buildings, minor deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Full ground level inspection with decay detecting equipment.**
7	Leyland Cypress *Cupressocyparis leylandii*	6	N 2 E 2 S 2 W 2	200	MA	N	C	Low hanging branches, fastigiate, crown shape distorted and trunk shape distorted due to group pressure, minor deadwood, tarmac to South approximately 1m away, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**

8	English Oak *Quercus robur*	8	N 4 E 2 S 3.5 W 3	300	MA	N	B/C	Old pruning wounds, major deadwood, crown shape distorted due to group pressure, paving stones approximately 0.5m away from trunk, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
9	Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*	7	N 2 E 4 S 4 W 5	340	MA	N	C	Basal suckers, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, minor deadwood, old pruning wounds, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
10	English Oak *Quercus robur*	14	N 2 E 3 S 3 W 2	600	M	L	C	Severe ivy preventing full survey, low crown density, crown shape distorted and trunk shape distorted, major deadwood, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Sever ivy and re-inspect, remove deadwood.**
11	English Oak *Quercus robur*	13	N 3.5 E 3 S 3 W 4	500	M	N	B/C	Low hanging branches, crown shape distorted, major deadwood, dead hanging branches, recent earth works around trunk, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
12	English Oak *Quercus robur*	13	N 6 E 5 S 4 W 4	700	M	N	B/C	Recent earth works around base, epicormics, low hanging branches, old pruning wounds, minor deadwood, bark wounds, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
13	English Oak *Quercus robur*	15	N 5 E 3 S 6 W 6	600	M	N	B/C	Large buttress roots, low hanging branches, epicormics, old pruning wounds, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted, minor deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery; No works required.**
14	Lime *Tilia x europaea*	12	N 1 E 4 S 6 W 2.5	230 350	M	N	C	Basal suckers, bifurcated at 0.5m, large buttress roots, crown shape distorted and trunk shape distorted due to group pressure, low hanging branches, minor deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
15	Lime *Tilia x europaea*	19	N 4 E 3 S 3 W 2	580	M	N	B/C	Basal suckers, low hanging branches, bifurcated at 3.5m, minor deadwood, crown shape distorted and trunk shape distorted due to group pressure, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
16	Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris*	22	N 3 E 2 S 3 W 3	630	M	N	B/C	Severe ivy prevents full survey, large buttress roots, bifurcated at 12m, major deadwood, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
17	Yew *Taxus baccata*	10	N 2 E 3 S 4 W 3.5	400 180 290	M	N	B/C	Low hanging branches, trifurcated at ground level, crown shape distorted, minor deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
18	Lime *Tilia x europaea*	23	N 4 E 5 S 5 W 4	800	M	N	B/C	Large buttress roots, basal suckers, low hanging branches, minor deadwood, crown shape distorted and trunk shape distorted, bifurcated at 7m, apical dieback on one stem, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
19	Yew *Taxus baccata*	10	N 3 E 3 S 2.5 W 3	660	M	N	B/C	Low hanging branches, minor deadwood, trifurcated at 2m, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**

20	Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*	10	N 4 E 2 S 3 W 2	200 280 230	MA	N	C	Trifurcated at ground level, low hanging branches, crown shape distorted due to group pressure, minor deadwood, tarmac approximately 1m to East, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
21	English Oak *Quercus robur*	13	N 4 E 6 S 5 W 4	760	M	N	B/C	Large buttress roots, epicormics, old pruning wounds, major deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
22	English Oak *Quercus robur*	14	N 3 E 4 S 3 W 3	640	M	N	B	Large buttress roots, bifurcated at 4.5m, minor deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
23	Lime *Tilia x europaea*	13	N 5 E 4 S 3 W 4	420	M	N	C	Large buttress roots, basal suckers, lower branches reduced, minor deadwood, fair shape and form, roots lifting concrete to East. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
24	Lime *Tilia x europaea*	14	N 4 E 3 S 3 W 3	500	M	N	C	Large buttress roots, basal suckers, lower branches reduced, minor deadwood, roots lifting concrete to East, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
25	English Oak *Quercus robur*	15	N 4 E 5 S 4 W 4	660	M	N	B	Large buttress roots, epicormics, low hanging branches, old pruning wounds, crown shape distorted due to building, minor deadwood, concrete path and drain approximately 1m to West of main stem, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
26	English Oak *Quercus robur*	13	N 4 E 5 S 6 W 5	720	M	L	C	Large buttress roots, low crown density, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, apical dieback, concrete path 0.5m to West of main stem, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood and monitor.**
27	Holly *Ilex aquifolium*	7	N 2 E 2 S 2 W 2	Av 100	MA	N	C	Low hanging branches, crown shape distorted and trunk shape distorted, minor deadwood, poor quality tree, of limited value, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
28	English Oak *Quercus robur*	15	N 6 E 2 S 4 W 4	580	M	N	C	Reaction wood at base of main stem, epicormics, old pruning wounds, crown shape distorted due to group pressure, crown weighted West, major deadwood, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
29	English Oak *Quercus robur*	15	N 5 E 5 S 4 W 2	590	M	N	C	Bark wounds, epicormics, old pruning wounds, major deadwood, crown shape distorted due to group pressure and weighted East, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
30	Holly *Ilex aquifolium*	6	N 1 E 2 S 2 W 2	Av 100	MA	N	C	Low hanging branches, crown shape distorted and trunk shape distorted, minor deadwood, poor quality tree, of limited value, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
31	Lime *Tilia x europaea*	14	N 3 E 6 S 2 W 2	570 320	M	N	C/D	Basal suckers, bifurcated at ground level, major wound with cavity, apical dieback, poor quality tree, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Advise fell.**
32	Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*	6	N 4 E 3 S 3 W 3	240	MA	N	C/D	Basal wound with decay, minor deadwood, trifurcated at 2m, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: Advise fell.**

33	Yew *Taxus baccata*	5	N 2 E 2 S 2 W 3	160 180 170	MA	N	B/C	Trifurcated at 1.5m, low hanging branches, minor deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
34	Yew *Taxus baccata*	7	N 4 E 5 S 5 W 5	400	M	N	B/C	Low hanging branches, crown shape distorted, minor deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
35	Cedar of Lebanon *Cedrus libani*	20	N 4 E 3 S 4 W 5	600	M	N	B	Low hanging branches, old pruning wounds, minor deadwood, crown shape distorted, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
36	Field Maple *Acer campestre*	12	N 2 E 2 S 3 W 7	310	MA	N	C	Large buttress roots, low hanging branches, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted and leans West, minor deadwood, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
37	Lime *Tilia x europaea*	15	N 4 E 6 S 3 W 4	770	M	N	C	Large buttress roots, basal suckers, previously crown reduced, old pruning wounds, with decay minor deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Climbing inspection required of old pruning wounds.**
38	Yew *Taxus baccata*	8	N 4 E 3 S 4 W 4	430	M	N	B/C	Large buttress roots, low hanging branches, bark wounds to main stem on Southwest side, crown shape distorted, minor deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
39	English Oak *Quercus robur*	16	N 6 E 7 S 6 W 5	930	M	N	B	Large buttress roots, old pruning wounds, crown shape distorted and trunk shape distorted due to group pressure, major deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
40	English Oak *Quercus robur*	14	N 3 E 5 S 2.5 W 4	560	M	N	B/C	Low hanging branches, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, major deadwood, old pruning wounds, bark wound in crown, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
41	English Oak *Quercus robur*	16	N 5 E 4 S 5 W 5	630	M	N	C	Epicormics throughout crown, low hanging branches, major deadwood, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, old pruning wounds, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
42	English Oak *Quercus robur*	16	N 2 E 6 S 7 W 3	650	M	N	C	Low hanging branches, bifurcated at 3m, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, major deadwood, trunk and crown weighted Southeast, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
43	English Oak *Quercus robur*	17	N 4 E 6 S 7 W 4	920	M	N	B/C	Large buttress roots, low hanging branches, multi stemmed at 3.5m, old pruning wounds, storm damage in crown, major deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
44	English Oak *Quercus robur*	15	N 3 E 2.5 S 3 W 4	630	M	L	C	Reaction wood at base, trunk kinked at 2m, major deadwood, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted, epicormics, poor quality tree, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood and monitor.**

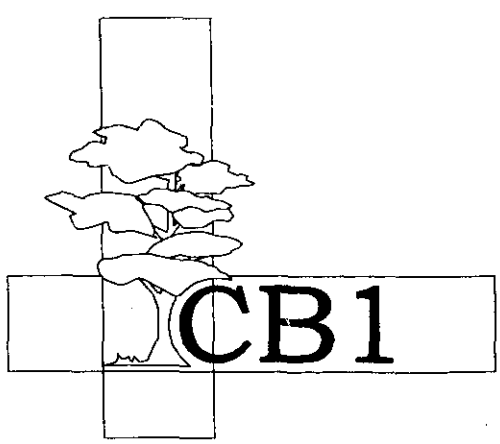
45	English Oak *Quercus robur*	17	N 5 E 6 S 7 W 3	840	M	L	C	Tall and etiolated tree due to group pressure, low crown density, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted, major deadwood, grows with tree 46, bifurcated at 7m, poor shape and form, poor quality tree. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood and monitor decline.**
46	Yew *Taxus baccata*	8	N 8 E 7 S 6 W 6	500	M	N	B/C	Grows with tree 45, large buttress roots, low hanging branches, crown shape distorted and trunk shape distorted due to group pressure, minor deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
47	English Oak *Quercus robur*	15	N 5 E 7 S 4 W 7	740	M	N	C	Large buttress roots, old pruning wounds, epicormics, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, major deadwood, bark wounds, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
48	Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*	12	N 3 E 4 S 4 W 3	430	M	N	C	Basal suckers, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted and leans South over building, minor deadwood, bark wounds, old pruning wounds, poor shape and form, poor quality tree. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
49	English Oak *Quercus robur*	17	N 3 E 5 S 7 W 6	660	M	N	C	Ivy on main trunk, epicormics, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, major deadwood, storm damage, trunk shape distorted and crown weighted South over building, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
50	Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*	11	N 3 E 4 S 2 W 3	390	M	N	C	Old pruning wounds, crown shape distorted, major deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
51	Cedar Deodar	6	N 1 E 2 S 2 W 2	200	MA	N	B/C	Low hanging branches, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted, minor deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
52	Cedar Deodar	7	N 3 E 3 S 3 W 3	200	MA	N	A/B	Low hanging branches, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
53	Monkey Puzzle *Araucaria araucana*	15	N 3 E 4 S 3 W 4	700	M	N	A/B	Good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
54	Cedar of Lebanon *Cedrus libani*	22	N 12 E 10 S 11 W 11	2700	M	N	A/B	Bifurcated at 1m. old pruning wounds, minor deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
55	English Oak *Quercus robur*	13	N 5 e 4 S 3 W 6	800	M	N	C	Previously crown reduced, old pruning wounds, crown shape distorted, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
56	Lime *Tilia x europaea*	6	N 2.5 E 2.5 S 2.5 W 2.5	230	MA	N	C	Basal suckers, bark wounds, bifurcated at 2.5m with included bark, low hanging branches, minor deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
57	English Oak *Quercus robur*	6	N 2 E 3 S 2 W 2	1300	OM	-	D	Large buttress roots, epicormics, main stem snapped out at 6m leaving stump, major decay, 90% dead tree, poor quality tree, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Advise fell.**

58	Cooper Beech *Fagus sylvatica*	4	N 1 E 1.5 S 0.5 W 1	130	Y	N	B/C	Low hanging branches, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted, minor deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
59	English Oak Quercus robur	13	N 4 E 7 S 7 W 6	Approx 2000	OM	N	C	Large buttress roots, low hanging branches, trifurcated at 2.5m, main trunk pruned to point of trifurcation, major decay, minor deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Full ground level inspection with decay detecting equipment.**
60	English Oak *Quercus robur*	20	N 5 E 6 S 10 W 4	1110	M	N	B/C	Large buttress roots, low hanging branches, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, major deadwood, old pruning wounds, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
61	English Oak *Quercus robur*	16	N 5 E 5 S 7 W 10	1190	M	N	B/C	Large buttress roots, low hanging branches, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, major deadwood, old pruning wounds, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
62	English Oak *Quercus robur*	15	N 7 E 6 S 5 W 5	1120	M	N	B/C	Large buttress roots, epicormics, old pruning wounds, storm damage, crown shape distorted, major deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
63	English Oak x 2 *Quercus robur*	16	N 7 E 5 S 6 W 5	1000 930	M	N	C	Two trees forming one crown, low hanging branches, ivy on main trunk, old pruning wounds, storm damage, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, major deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
64	English Oak *Quercus robur*	15	N 7 E 6 S 6 W 7	900	M	N	C	Trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, storm damage, low hanging branches, major deadwood, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
65	English Oak *Quercus robur*	6	N 2 E 3 S 4 W 3	600	M	N	C	Epicormics, top snapped out, minor deadwood, poor shape and form, poor quality tree. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
66	English Oak *Quercus robur*	16	N 7 E 8 S 8 W 3	1000	M	N	C	Trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, low hanging branches, epicormics, major deadwood, storm damage to crown, old pruning wounds, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood and storm damage.**
67	English Oak *Quercus robur*	14	N 4 E 3 S 3 W 5	770	M	N	C	Trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, low hanging branches, epicormics, major deadwood, storm damage to crown, old pruning wounds, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood and storm damage.**
68	English Oak *Quercus robur*	16	N 6 E 7 S 3 W 4	790	M	N	C	Large buttress roots, low hanging branches, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted and weighted North, old pruning wounds, major deadwood, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
69	English Oak *Quercus robur*	14	N 6 E 7 S 7 E 5	890	M	N	C	Large buttress roots, low hanging branches, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, old pruning wounds with decay visible, major deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood and monitor decline.**

70	Goat Willow	7	N 2 E 2 S 2 W 2	Av 100	Y	N	C	Multi stemmed at 0.5m, low hanging branches, crown shape distorted, canker throughout crown, minor deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: *No works required.***
71	English Oak *Quercus robur*	13	N 6 E 5 S 3 W 4	1120	OM	L	C	Large buttress roots, old pruning wounds with decay, previously crown reduced, low hanging branches, crown shape distorted, minor deadwood, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
72	English Oak *Quercus robur*	19	N 7 E 8 S 2 W 2	Approx 2000	OM	L	C	Large buttress roots, large old pruning wounds, multi stemmed at 3m, previously crown reduced, major deadwood, poor shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
73	English Oak *Quercus robur*	15	N 7 E 6 S 7 W 6	1110	OM	L	C/D	Major decay on Southwest side of main trunk with fungal fruiting bodies. **Tree surgery: Advise fell.**
74	Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*	15	N 3 E 4 S 3 W 3	320	MA	N	B	Low hanging branches, bifurcated at 3m, minor deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
75	Pear spp *Pyrus communis*	5	N 3 E 2 S 3 W 2	200	M	N	C	Bifurcated at 2m, major deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
76	English Oak *Quercus robur*	13	N 4 E 5 S 4 W 5	700	M	N	C	Severe ivy, large buttress roots, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted, major deadwood, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Sever ivy and remove deadwood.**
77	Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*	6	N 4 E 5 S 4 W 4	Av 150	MA	N	C	Multi stemmed at ground level, trunk kinks at base, minor deadwood, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, poor shape and form, poor quality tree. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
78	Lime *Tilia x europaea*	7	N 2 E 3 S 2 W 2	240	MA	N	B/C	Low hanging branches, bifurcated at 2m with included bark, minor deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
79	Weeping Willow *Salix babylonica*	13	N 4 E 4 S 4 W 4	460	M	N	B	Low hanging branches, major deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
80	Pear spp *Pyrus communis*	8	N 1 E2 S 1.5 W 1.5	250	M	N	C	Bark wounds, recent development on surrounding area, low hanging branches, old pruning wounds, minor deadwood, good shape and form. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
G1	Ash Yew Laurel Holly	Av 6	N - E - S - W -	Av 150	MA	N	C	Low hanging branches, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, minor deadwood, poor shape and form as individuals, good shape and form as group. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
G2	Laurel Holly Holm Oak Yew	Av 6	N - E - S - W -	Av 100	MA	N	C	Low hanging branches, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, minor deadwood, poor shape and form as individuals, good shape and form as group. **Tree surgery: No works required.**

G3	Hornbeam Ash Sycamore Hawthorn	Av 7	N - E - S - W -	Av 150	MA	N	B/C	Linear group, some tall and etiolated trees due to group pressure, some crown shapes distorted and trunk shapes distorted due to group pressure and parameter fence, minor deadwood, good shape and form as group poor shape and form as individuals. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
G4	English Oak Beech Hornbeam Silver Birch Laurel Whitebeam Elder Elm Ash Holly Hawthorn Lime	Av 12	N - E - S - W -	300	M	N	B	Linear group of mature tree with a strong underpinning of mixed species, some bifurcated and some multi stemmed, ivy on main trunk, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, low hanging branches, forms boundary to and from site, some dead Elm and some dead, dying and dangerous trees, good shape and form as group, fair shape and form as individuals. **Tree surgery: Remove dead, dying and dangerous trees.**
G5	Horse Chestnut Sycamore Holly Leyland Cypress	Av 8	N - E - S - W -	Av 200	MA	N	B/C	Group of trees screening boiler house and oil tanks, low hanging branches, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, severe ivy, minor deadwood, good shape and form as group, fair shape and form as individuals. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
G6	Sycamore Laurel	Av 5	N - E - S - W -	Av 150	MA	N	C	Trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, low hanging branches, some bifurcated and multi stemmed, poor shape and form as group, poor shape and form as individuals. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
G7	Lime Yew Sycamore Horse Chestnut English Oak Ash Cherry	Av 8	N - E - S - W -	Av 200	MA to M	N	B/C	Mixed group of middle aged to mature trees, low hanging branches, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, some bifurcated and multi stemmed, minor deadwood, some severe ivy, fair shape and form as individuals, poor shape and form as group. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
G8	Yew x 1 Holly x 2 Dawn Redwood x 2 Cedar x 1 Laurel	Av 14	N - E - S - W -	Av 500	M	N	B/C	Mixed group of mature trees, underpinned by Laurel, major deadwood, storm damage, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, low hanging branches, possible earth works around main trunks, fair shape and form. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
G9	Yew x 2 Hornbeam x 1 Sycamore x 2 False Acacia x 1	Av 10	N - E - S - W -	Av 200	MA	N	C	Low hanging branches, some multi stemmed and bifurcated, minor deadwood, crown shapes distorted and trunk shapes distorted due to group pressure, some dead, dying and dangerous trees, fair shape and form as group, fair shape and form as individuals. **Tree surgery: Remove dead, dying and dangerous trees.**
G10	English Oak x 4 Holly Yew Laurel Hazel	Av 12	N - E - S - W -	Av 350	MA to M	N	B/C	Two mature Oak trees with a dense underpinning of Holly, Yew, Laurel and Hazel and Young Oaks, low hanging branches, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, major deadwood, fair shape and form as group, fair shape and form as individuals. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood .**

G11	Laurel Holly English Oak Hazel Euronymus Lilac Yew Elder Sycamore Elm	Av 10	N - E - S - W -	Av 300	MA to M	N	B/C	Dense group of mature trees with a middle aged underpinning, low hanging branches, some bifurcated and multi stemmed, trunk shape distorted and crown shape distorted due to group pressure, major deadwood on mature trees, some dead, dying and dangerous trees, fair shape and form as individuals, good shape and form as group. **Tree surgery: Remove dead, dying and dangerous trees.**
G12	English Oak Laurel Holly Lime Beech Hornbeam	Av 14	N - E - S - W -	Av 370	M	N	B	*Mature trees with a mixed underpinning*, some bifurcated and multi stemmed, low hanging branches, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, some tall and etiolated trees due to group pressure, some major deadwood, fair shape and form as individuals, good shape and form as group. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
G13	Leyland Cypress Sycamore Cherry English Oak	Av 7	N - E - S - W -	Av 150	MA	N	C	Hedgerow trees, low hanging branches, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, minor deadwood, fair shape and form as individuals, fair shape and form as group. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
G14	English Oak Hazel Goat Willow	Av 14	N - E - S - W -	Av 500	M	N	B/C	Part of a woodland, mature Oaks with a underpinning of Hazel coppice and Goat Willow, some bifurcated and multi stemmed, low hanging branches, old pruning wounds, major deadwood. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
G15	Leyland Cypress	Av 5	N - E - S - W-	Av 100	Y	N	C	Hedgerow trees, low hanging branches, minor deadwood, poor shape and form as individuals, poor shape and form as group. **Tree surgery: Re-plant gaps to form boundary screen.**
G16	Cherry False Acacia English Oak Sycamore Approximately 19 trees.	Av 12	N - E - S - W -	Av 250	MA	N	B	Some bifurcated and multi stemmed, low hanging branches, some major deadwood, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, some becoming tall and etiolated due to group pressure, good shape and form as individuals, poor shape and form as group. **Tree surgery: Remove deadwood.**
G17	Apple Pear	Av 6	N - E - S - W -	Av 200	M	N	C	Some bifurcated and multi stemmed, low hanging branches, minor deadwood, basal suckers, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, poor shape and form as group, poor shape and form as individuals. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
G18	Lime	Av 19	N - E - S- W -	Av 250	M	N	C	Tall and etiolated trees due to group pressure, crown shapes distorted and trunk shapes distorted due to group pressure, some multi stemmed, old pruning wounds, minor deadwood. **Tree surgery: No works required.**
W1	Laurel Sycamore English Oak Pine Lilac Yew Whitebeam Cherry Elm Holly Beech Hornbeam Silver Birch Lime	Av 14	N - E - S - W-	Av 350	MA to M	N	B	Woodland environment, trunk shapes distorted and crown shapes distorted due to group pressure, some multi stemmed and bifurcated, mature trees with middle aged underpinning, some dead, dying and dangerous trees, low hanging branches, old pruning wounds, major deadwood, fair shape and form as individuals, good shape and form as woodland. **Tree surgery: Fell dead, dying and dangerous trees and leave for habitat.**


CB1

COLIN BASHFORD ASSOCIATES LIMITED

Met Office College, Shinfield, Reading

Protective Fencing

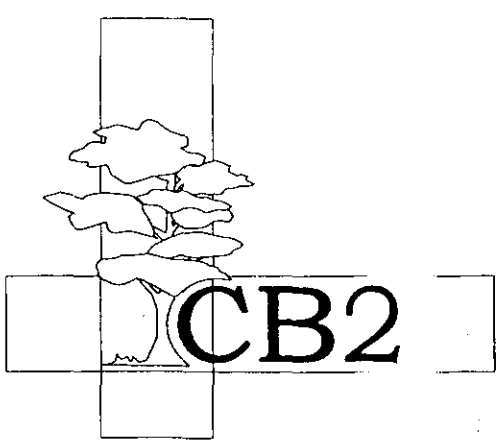
Tree No	Species	Age	Vig	Diam	Category	Minimum Distance Required
1	Hornbeam	M	N	Av 300	B	4.0
2	English Oak	M	N	600	B/C	6.0
3	Ash	MA	L	320	C	7.5
4	English Oak	M	N	730	A/B	6.0
5	Sycamore	MA	N	330	C	4.5
6	Sycamore	M	N	330 300 270	C	4.0
7	Leyland Cypress	MA	N	200	C	3.0
8	English Oak	MA	N	300	B/C	4.5
9	Sycamore	MA	N	340	C	4.5
10	English Oak	M	L	600	C	9.0
11	English Oak	M	N	500	B/C	6.0
12	English Oak	M	N	700	B/C	6.0
13	English Oak	M	N	600	B/C	6.0
14	Lime	M	N	230 350	C	4.0
15	Lime	M	N	580	B/C	6.0
16	Scots Pine	M	N	630	B/C	6.0
17	Yew	M	N	400 180 290	B/C	6.0
18	Lime	M	N	800	B/C	8.0
19	Yew	M	N	660	B/C	6.0
20	Sycamore	MA	N	200 280 230	C	4.5
21	English Oak	M	N	760	B/C	8.0
22	English Oak	M	N	640	B	6.0
23	Lime	M	N	420	C	6.0
24	Lime	M	N	500	C	6.0
25	English Oak	M	N	660	B	6.0

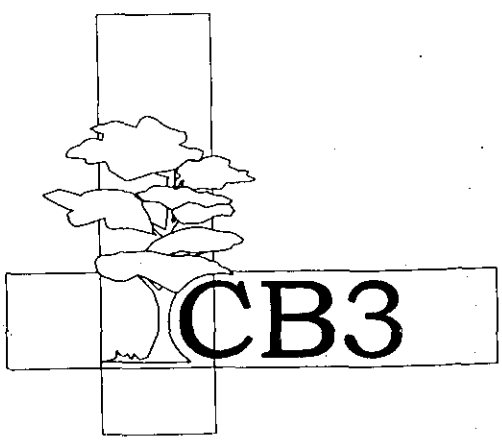
Tree No	Species	Age	Vig	Diam	Category	Minimum Distance Required
26	English Oak	M	L	720	C	9.0
27	Holly	MA	N	Av 100	C	3.0
28	English Oak	M	N	580	C	6.0
29	English Oak	M	N	590	C	6.0
30	Holly	MA	N	Av 100	C	3.0
31	Lime	M	N	570 320	C/D	RSAM
32	Sycamore	MA	N	240	C/D	RSAM
33	Yew	MA	N	160 180 170	B/C	3.0
34	Yew	M	N	400	B/C	6.0
35	Cedar of Lebanon	M	N	600	B	6.0
36	Field Maple	MA	N	310	C	4.5
37	Lime	M	N	770	C	8.0
38	Yew	M	N	430	B/C	6.0
39	English Oak	M	N	930	B	8.0
40	English Oak	M	N	560	B/C	6.0
41	English Oak	M	N	630	C	6.0
42	English Oak	M	N	650	C	6.0
43	English Oak	M	N	920	B/C	8.0
44	English Oak	M	L	630	C	9.0
45	English Oak	M	L	840	C	12.0
46	Yew	M	N	500	B/C	6.0
47	English Oak	M	N	740	C	6.0
48	Sycamore	M	N	430	C	6.0
49	English Oak	M	N	660	C	6.0
50	Sycamore	M	N	390	C	6.0
51	Cedar deodar	MA	N	200	B/C	3.0
52	Cedar deodar	MA	N	200	A/B	3.0
53	Monkey Puzzle	M	N	700	A/B	6.0
54	Cedar of Lebanon	M	N	2700	A/B	8.0

Tree No	Species	Age	Vig	Diam	Category	Minimum Distance Required
55	English Oak	M	N	800	C	8.0
56	Lime	MA	N	230	C	3.0
57	English Oak	OM	–	1300	D	RSAM
58	Cooper Beech	Y	N	130	B/C	2.0
59	English Oak	OM	N	Approx 2000	C	12.0
60	English Oak	M	N	1110	B/C	8.0
61	English Oak	M	N	1190	B/C	8.0
62	English Oak	M	N	1120	B/C	8.0
63	English Oak x 2	M	N	1000 930	C	8.0
64	English Oak	M	N	900	C	8.0
65	English Oak	M	N	600	C	6.0
66	English Oak	M	N	1000	C	8.0
67	English Oak	M	N	770	C	8.0
68	English Oak	M	N	790	C	8.0
69	English Oak	M	N	890	C	8.0
70	Goat Willow	Y	N	Av 100	C	2.0
71	English Oak	OM	L	1120	C	12.0
72	English Oak	OM	L	Approx 2000	C	12.0
73	English Oak	OM	L	1110	C/D	RSAM
74	Ash	MA	N	320	B	4.5
75	Pear spp	M	N	200	C	4.0
76	English Oak	M	N	700	C	6.0
77	Sycamore	MA	N	Av 150	C	3.0
78	Lime	MA	N	240	B/C	3.0
79	Weeping Willow	M	N	460	B	6.0
80	Pear spp	M	N	250	C	4.0

Tree No	Species	Age	Vig	Diam	Category	Minimum Distance Required From Edge of Group
G1	Ash Yew Laurel Holly	MA	N	Av 150	C	3.0
G2	Laurel Holly Holm Oak Yew	MA	N	Av 100	C	3.0
G3	Hornbeam Ash Sycamore Hawthorn	MA	N	Av 150	B/C	3.0
G4	English Oak Beech Hornbeam Silver Birch Laurel Whitebeam Elder Elm Ash Holly Hawthorn Lime	M	N	Av 300	B	4.0
G5	Horse Chestnut Sycamore Holly Leyland Cypress	MA	N	Av 200	B/C	3.0
G6	Sycamore Laurel	MA	N	Av 150	C	5.0
G7	Lime Yew Sycamore Horse Chestnut English Oak Ash Cherry	MA to M	N	Av 200	B/C	4.0
G8	Yew x 1 Holly x 2 Dawn Redwood x 2 Cedar x 1 Laurel	M	N	Av 500	B/C	6.0
G9	Yew x 2 Hornbeam x 1 Sycamore x 2 False Acacia x 1	MA	N	Av 200	C	3.0
G10	English Oak x 4 Holly Yew Laurel Hazel	MA to M	N	Av 350	B/C	4.0

Tree No	Species	Age	Vig	Diam	Category	Minimum Distance Required From Edge of Group
G11	Laurel Holly English Oak Hazel Euronymus Lilac Yew Elder Sycamore Elm	MA to M	N	Av 300	B/C	4.0
G12	English Oak Laurel Holly Lime Beech Hornbeam	M	N	Av 370	B	6.0
G13	Leyland Cypress Sycamore Cherry English Oak	MA	N	Av 150	C	3.0
G14	English Oak Hazel Goat Willow	M	N	Av 500	B/C	6.0
G15	Leyland Cypress	Y	N	Av 100	C	2.0
G16	Cherry *False Acacia* English Oak Sycamore Approximately 19 trees.	MA	N	Av 250	B	4.5
G17	Apple Pear	M	N	Av 200	C	4.0
G18	Lime	M	N	Av 250	C	4.0
W1	Laurel Sycamore English Oak Pine Lilac Yew Whitebeam Cherry Elm Holly Beech Hornbeam Silver Birch Lime	MA to M	N	Av 350	B	6.0 From woodland edge trees


CB2


CB3

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Colin Bashford Associates Ltd is a recognised specialist arboricultural and landscaping consultancy practicing nationally and internationally from offices at The Brewery, High Street, Twyford, Hampshire, SO21 1RG. Its Chairman and Principal Consultant is Colin Geoffrey Bashford MBE, M.Arb., F.Arbor.A, is a Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association.

He is now in full-time private practice with over thirty-five years practical and managerial experience in the industry. This includes over six years in forestry and arboriculture at Broadlands, the estate of the late Lord Mountbatten, more than six years in Local Authority arboricultural officer posts, at district level with Brighton Borough Council and county level with East Sussex County Council and sixteen years with the Department of the Environment as Senior Arboriculturist advising Central Government.

Senior Consultant Bernard Harverson along with other consultants and associate consultants of the practice are all highly and appropriately qualified arboriculturists or specialists in their own right. The Arboriculturists are all holders of the Master in Arboriculture or the National Diploma in Arboriculture, with considerable experience at the highest levels in both Public and Private practice. Bernard Harverson is also a Fellow of the Arboriculture Association.

Between 1976 and 1990, Colin Bashford was the Senior Arboriculturist at the Department of Environment and Advisor to Central Government, on trees and amenity. Tasks among many were the heading and control of research into arboriculture; supplying specialist advice up to Ministerial level for all government bodies, agencies and Departments and providing technical and policy input, on trees, as necessary for all documentation, publications, Circulars and legislation. Regularly for fourteen years and on numerous occasions each year, he was the Inspecting Officer on technical cases

decided by the written representation rules or the Technical Assessor at Public Local Inquiries or Hearings on Appeals made to the Secretary of State, under the Town and Country Planning Acts, in respect of trees.

For many years based with the Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, prior to its reorganisation as English Heritage, he advised on all government tree matters and had a special input into trees and their relationship to Archaeology, Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Gardens.

In addition to the routine requirements with the Department of Environment he advised on and was involved with; the campaigns against Dutch Elm Disease and Acid Rain and the massive insurance claims following the droughts principally of 1976. He dealt directly with many claims made against Central Government and assisted in formulating policy and advice on this matter with the British Insurance Association, the National House Building Council and the Buildings Research Establishment. More recently, following the hurricane force winds and damage of October 1987, he helped to co-ordinate the national approach to dealing with the disaster; advised on the setting up, work and funding of Task Force Trees and was a member of the Government's Technical Co-ordinating Committee on the Great Storm of 1987, whose report and subsequent response of Central Government was published in 1988.

Awarded the MBE, for services to and work with trees, in the 1990 Queens Birthday Honours List, Colin Bashford holds the National Diploma in Arbor, (presently referred to as Master in Arboriculture) and is a Fellow of the Arboricultural Association. He is a past Examiner and Senior Examiner for the Royal Forestry Society National Diploma in Arboriculture and a frequent member of consultancy committees for the British Standards Institute.

He is a Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association a past member, of the Executive Council of that body and a former Chairman of their Education and Publication Committee and the Consultants' Sub Committee. He is also President of the UK and Ireland Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture and a Director of the Board of that Society.

Currently he is Chairman of the Corporation of Governors for Merrist Wood College near Guildford, which is renowned world wide for its provision of arboricultural courses and education for the land based industries. He regularly lectures at colleges and universities; and is a lecturer and Chairman at National and International Conferences and is approved by the Law Society as an Expert Witness and a member of the Academy of Experts.

Operating nationally and internationally as necessary, CBA provides arboricultural advice, tree surveys, appraisals, assessments and inspections, for all purposes and on a wide range of tree related issues, with particular reference to planning, safety, development sites, danger, insurance, litigation, subsidence and structural damage associated with trees. This includes advice to and working with several Departments of Central Government, public authorities, allied professions, commercial companies and environmental and amenity organisations: on tree maintenance, tree surgery, planting and on specifications for successful tree retention and soft landscaping on development sites or in association with construction. As leading consultants in arboriculture, CBA are instructed on major housing, business, urban, rural and leisure developments; often as part of a multi-disciplinary specialist team. A prominent strength is a regular involvement on the arboricultural and landscape aspects in the planning, design, development, maintenance and renovation of retail warehouses, superstores, holiday parks and villages; motorways and major trunk road schemes. CBA Ltd, and in particular Colin Bashford, are regularly instructed to give evidence at Planning Appeals

Hearings and Public Local Inquiries, and provide specialist evidence as an expert witness in Court.

APPENDIX 3

Tree Impact Schedule

MET OFFICE RELOCATION – SHINFIELD PARK : TREE IMPACT SCHEDULE

Individual Trees to be removed

5	C	Sycamore
6	C	Sycamore *
7	C	Leyland Cypress
8	B/C	English Oak *
9	C	Sycamore
10	C	English Oak
11	B/C	English Oak *
12	B/C	English Oak *
13	B/C	English Oak *
14	C	Lime *
15	B/C	Lime *
16	B/C	Scots Pine
17	B/C	Scots Pine
18	B/C	Lime *
19	B/C	Yew *
20	C	Sycamore *
31	C/D	Lime •
32	C/D	Sycamore •
33	B/C	Yew
34	B/C	Yew
35	B	Cedar of Lebanon *
36	C	Field Maple
37	C	Lime *
38	B/C	Yew *
45	C	English Oak
46	B/C	Yew *
47	C	English Oak
48	C	Sycamore
50	C	Sycamore *
51	B/C	Cedar Deodar
57	D	English Oak •

Individual Trees to be retained

1	B	Hornbeam *
2	(B/C)	English Oak *
3	C	Ash
4	A/B	English Oak *
21	B/C	English Oak *
22	B	English Oak *
23	C	Lime *
24	C	Lime *
25	B	English Oak *
26	C	English Oak *
27	C	Holly
28	C	English Oak
29	C	English Oak
30	C	Holly
39	B	English Oak *
40	B/C	English Oak *
41	C	English Oak *
42	C	English Oak
43	B/C	English Oak *
44	C	English Oak
49	C	English Oak
52	A/B	Cedar Deodar
53	A/B	Monkey Puzzle *
54	A/B	Cedar of Lebanon
55	C	English Oak
56	C	Lime *
58	B/C	Copper Beech
59	C	English Oak *
60	B/C	English Oak *
61	B/C	English Oak *
62	B/C	English Oak *
63	C	English Oak *

Individual Trees to be removed

72	C	English Oak
73	C/D	English Oak •
74	B	Ash *
75	C	Pear spp
76	C	English Oak *
77	C	Sycamore
78	B/C	Lime
79	B	Weeping Willow *
80	C	Pear spp

Individual Trees to be retained

64	C	English Oak
65	C	English Oak
66	C	English Oak *
67	C	English Oak
68	C	English Oak
69	C	English Oak
70	C	Goat Willow
71	C	English Oak

Groups of trees/woodland to be removed		**(%)**
G1	C	100
G2	C	100
G3	B/C	50
G4	B	15
G5	B/C	100
G6	C	100
G7	B/C	100
G8	B/C	100
G10	B/C	100
G11	B/C	100
G15	C	10
G16	B	100
G17	C	100
G18	C	100

Groups of trees/woodland to be retained (100%)

G9

G12

G13

G14

W1

Individual trees:
TOTAL: 40 (18*)

Groups/woodland:

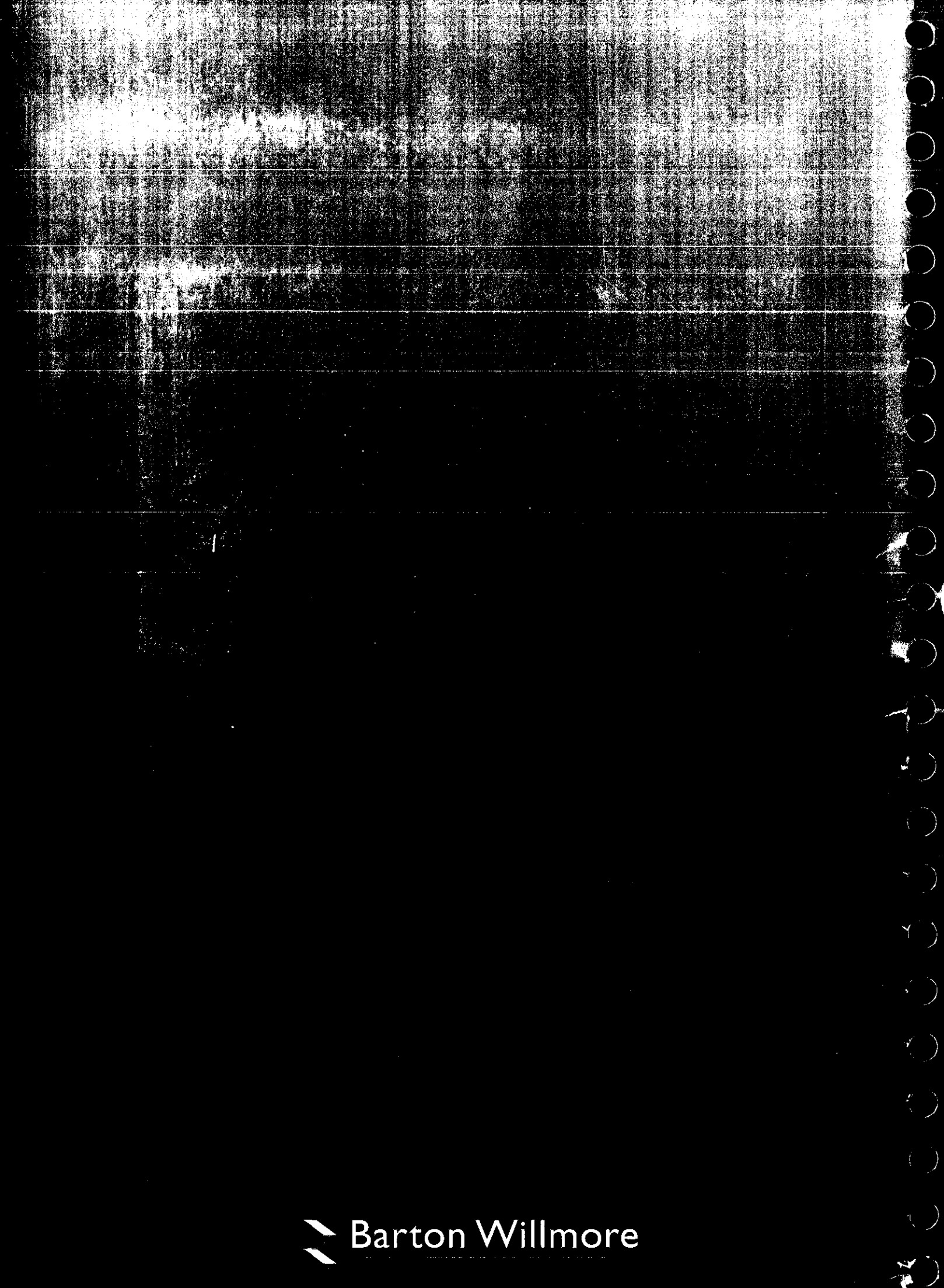
TOTAL: 14

Individual trees:
TOTAL: 40 (21*)

Groups/woodland:

TOTAL: 5

Note: * = Significant trees (in terms of size, condition and amenity value)
• = Recommended to fell



Barton Willmore

THE MET OFFICE, SHINFIELD PARK, READING

PLANNING STATEMENT

June 2000

PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE MET OFFICE TO SHINFIELD PARK

PLANNING STATEMENT

Prepared on behalf of
The Met Office by
The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership

The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership,
Beansheaf Farmhouse,
Bourne Close,
Calcot,
Reading,
Berkshire. RG31 7BW

Tel: 0118 943 0000
Fax: 0118 943 0002
Email: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

Ref: 9906/P2c/A5/WD/MR
Date: 7th June 2000

COPYRIGHT

The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership.

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Background to the proposal

3.0 *Brief description of the site and the proposed development.*

4.0 The planning policy context

5.0 Summary of the planning issues

6.0 Conclusions

ANNEXES TO THE STATEMENT

1. Landscape Appraisal and Assessment

2. Transport Report incorporating "a Green Transport/Travel Plan"

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Met. Office is a world leader in meteorology and climatology employing some 2,200 staff worldwide and is in the forefront of scientific and technological development. Its headquarters building at Bracknell was built in the early 1960's and is now increasingly outmoded as a building to serve The Met. Office's role as a world class weather and environmental service provider which is reliant on even more sophisticated computer and telecommunications equipment.

1.2 The Met. Office is therefore consulting Wokingham District Council regarding its proposed development under arrangements used by government departments under Department of the Environment Circular 18/84. The proposal is the construction at Shinfield Park of a new purpose built headquarters building; student accommodation block; social facilities building and associated parking deck, to provide accommodation for some 1,400 staff and specialist telecommunications and computer equipment. The existing college teaching facilities on site would be incorporated within the new development.

1.3 This Statement provides the background to the proposed new headquarters building at Shinfield Park including the reasons for such a relocation. It explains the proposals and shows how they have been developed in the context of planning policies at national, regional and local level. This statement also includes an architectural design statement accompanying a set of drawings (SK007B and SK008) prepared by Barton Willmore Architecture illustrating the proposed building, showing how it would sit on the site and its relationship to retained buildings on site. The illustrative drawings are intended to show how a building of this mass could be accommodated on site and includes an indicative elevation and section through the building. The drawings also indicate how a new vehicular access could be provided to the site from the reconfigured A327/B3270 Black Boy northern roundabout.

1.4 Accompanying the Statement are the following related documents:

- a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, prepared by Barton Willmore Environmental, describing the assessment of the site and the visual effects of the new building in the surrounding area;

- a Transport Report, prepared by WSP, setting out the transport proposals associated with the scheme, including the limitation of car parking provision; and the proposed development of The Met. Office's Green Transport/Travel Plan;

2.0 BACKGROUND TO PROPOSALS

2.1 The Met Office is an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Defence and has operated as a Trading Fund since April 1996. As the UK's National Meteorological Service it operates at the forefront of scientific and technological development, and occupies a world leading position in meteorology and climatology with an expanding, and increasingly global, customer base. The Met Office employs 2,200 staff of which some 40% are spread around the world with approximately 1,400 staff at London Road, Bracknell, at Beaufort Park, Easthampstead and at Shinfield Park, Reading.

2.2 The Met Office presently occupy premises at London Road roundabout, Bracknell (1.8 hectares) which is their main headquarters building together with four adjacent leasehold buildings and two other buildings leased in the Bracknell area. In addition their site at Beaufort Park, Easthampstead,(27 hectares) provides a technical development and instrumentation division, whilst the site at Shinfield Park, Reading (17.6 hectares) is the present home of The Met Office College. Over recent years changes in The Met. Office's business requirements have been accommodated, in part, through the leasing and disposal of land and property, mainly in the Bracknell area. This has resulted in the workforce being spread across several sites making communication between staff more difficult.

2.3 The Met. Office's London Road premises have now been judged to be unfit for purpose, with continued occupation not sustainable in the medium or long term. The premises are outdated and unsuitable for the long term future of the organisation.

2.4 The existing London Road buildings are of an age (early 1960's) where problems are now caused by inefficient configuration, limited floor to ceiling heights, inflexible cellular and structural layout and multi-storey construction. Such factors individually and combined inhibit the flexibility of occupation as well as the capability of the buildings to accommodate both organisational and technological changes. In addition the age of the buildings brings consequent increasing maintenance liabilities. Further the refurbishment of the London Road complex has been calculated to be only marginally less than the cost of a newly constructed bespoke building. Both a "do nothing" scenario and refurbishment of the London Road buildings have there been rejected.

2.5 The redevelopment of the existing London Road, Bracknell site has also been considered but is unlikely to achieve the requisite additional floorspace required for The Met. Office's future use given likely planning restrictions for the site. In addition the substantial costs of temporary off site accommodation during redevelopment are considered prohibitive. It is essential for The Met. Office that full operational capability is maintained through the transition period.

2.6 New accommodation is thus required to provide a modern efficient working environment fitting The Met. Office's standing as a world class weather and environmental service provider, to encourage modern good business practices including effectiveness and efficiency and be flexible to adapt to changing requirements. The advent of ever more sophisticated computer and telecommunications equipment in use by The Met. Office has further advanced the necessity of seeking new purpose built premises. There is a need to upgrade specialist computer facilities in early 2003 which requires new accommodation by the end of 2002.

2.7 The opportunity to relocate at Shinfield Park, presently the location of The Met. Office College, would provide the potential to build up relations with the adjacent European Centre for Medium Weather Forecasting (ECMWF) and strengthen ties with European partners. In addition existing links with the University of Reading where a number of staff work at the Joint Centre for Mesoscale Meteorology would also be strengthened. This would create a "centre of excellence" for meteorology and environmental sciences, since The Met. Office is a world leader in a number of areas including climate prediction research for the DETR and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

2.8 The Met. Office is also consulting with Bracknell Forest Borough Council under Circular 18/84 with regard to the construction of a similar headquarters building and parking deck at Beaufort Park, Nr. Bracknell. Following both consultations The Met. Office will consider their position with regard to relocation. At present a relocation away from the Reading-Bracknell area has not been considered in detail, nor have other non Met. Office owned sites in the locality been considered. A planning brief will be prepared in conjunction with Bracknell Forest Borough Council regarding the future use of the London Road, Bracknell site.

3.0 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND PROPOSALS

3.1 Shinfield Park is presently the home of The Met. Office Staff College where it provides training facilities and residential accommodation within a parkland and woodland setting. Historically it was an RAF Station and training school.

3.2 The site lies on an elevated plateau some 5.1 kilometres south of Reading town centre, and 1.7 kilometres east of junction 11 of the M4. It lies within the administrative area of Wokingham District in an identified urban area.

3.3 The overall site is 17.6 hectares in area and is bounded to the east by the Shinfield Road (A327); to the north by the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (ECMWF); to the west by woodland on the scarpslope and in the south by the Whitley Wood Lane (B3270) and the Foster Wheeler Building (formerly Shire Hall). The primary access to the site is from Whitley Wood Lane.

3.4 The existing site may conveniently be described with reference to a number of specific areas:

- The central core area: This contains a miscellany of single and two storey buildings of various ages including the main teaching and administrative area (Berkeley House), restaurant, new accommodation block, recreational areas and the Lodge, a Grade II late 18th century listed building. A number of these buildings have been adapted from their former RAF use. Others such as the restaurant and accommodation block are purpose built and of recent construction.

- The eastern area: This contains the two former accommodation blocks, North House and Stanmore House adjacent to Shinfield Road now respectively vacant, and used for limited teaching purposes.

- The former playing field: This is a level open area west of the main built up area with a tennis court to the south.

- The Woodland area: This western part of the site is identified as a wildlife heritage site.

- Access and car parking areas: This southern area provides the main access from the B3270 and includes the main site parking area.

- Theatre site: This is a former NAAFI building to the south of the site presently leased to the Shinfield Players.

3.5 A more detailed consideration of the site is contained in the Landscape Appraisal - Site Context and Appraisal.

Design Statement

3.6 As indicated on the illustrative drawings, the proposed new complex comprises approx 37,160 sq. metres (400,000 sq.ft) overall of accommodation to the south east corner of the site, including the existing Grade II lodge of 428 sq. metres (4,600 sq. ft) (which will be retained) and a replacement building for the present student residential accommodation provided at Alexandra House of 2,266 sq. metres (24,400 sq.ft approx). There are two main areas of additional new build, the main building providing office and ancillary teaching and computer operations accommodation of 33,351 sq. metres (359,000 sq.ft) and a social facilities building of 1,115 sq. metres (12,000 sq.ft). All other buildings presently on site with the exception of the listed building would be demolished to facilitate the new development.

3.7 The site is accessed from the south east via an enlarged roundabout on the junction of Whitley Wood Lane and Shinfield Road. Upon entering the site the entrance forecourt of the main building is immediately in view with its bus lay-by and drop off point. A link road to the west gives access to the social facilities building off Whitley Wood Road and the decked car park adjacent to Nores Hill Copse. An informal driveway west of the main building gives occasional access to Alexandra House to the north west off Shinfield Road and the Lodge to the north.

3.8 The entrance forecourt is semi enclosed by a stepped perimeter corner. A circular core tower marks each corner of the building aiding orientation, the largest marking the entrance forecourt and a quarter circle structurally glazed reception area.

3.9 The perimeter corners are created by four 3 storey 15m high (approx) pavilion buildings. Each pavilion contains a full height 12m wide internal street with a view at each end over a perimeter corner to the surrounding landscape. Each "street" has a translucent membrane roof over access galleries linked by bridges. Barrel vaulted office areas flank the internal street, each office area having a roof top plant area accessible by crane from the office ends to permit ease of plant replacement.

3.10 Each pavilion is linked on two corners by the core towers to create a central courtyard with a restaurant pod. Perimeter tensile membrane canopies, solar shading and a central feature canopy create a modern interpretation of the Oxbridge quadrangle.

3.11 The external office elevations are glazed between masonry piers. The piers are stepped at the top to receive the angled tubular steel roof supports. These stepped piers are most visible on the office ends where the feature roof trusses can also be seen. The internal street is expressed externally by structural glazing between the stepped piers of the offices. The core towers are clad in hi-tech cladding and are crowned by communication/feature masts.

3.12 The Operations Centre occupies the south west stepped perimeter corner and comprises a 3 storey secure isolated building, for uninterrupted continual operations, with an internal central dividing fire break and secure glazed link to the main building. The built form and aesthetic will act independently from the main built form visually expressing the contrasting internal "hi-tech" use.

3.13 The social facilities unit comprises a mainly double height single storey building accommodating social and sports facilities, a crèche and information centre. A separate car park for the social facilities building will be formed at the end of the existing track from Whitley Wood Lane to allow separate and secure controllable parking.

3.14 The primary parking area comprises a decked car park enclosure of 750 parking spaces. The decked layout up to 4.5 metres in height will utilise the natural slope and

landscaping of the existing site towards the western woodland area to reduce the overall height (3.5m approx) of the eastern elevation and its visual impact on the main building and operations wing. Such a parking area would be accessed from a 6 metre width road running south of the headquarters building.

3.15 The car park design will provide a modern, secure, open parking environment with high levels of natural ventilation and daylight. Surrounding external landscaping will be enhanced to minimise overall visual impact on the visually significant southern boundary of the site.

3.16 The new Alexandra House comprises a 2-storey building of student residential accommodation of a comparable height to the existing Alexandra House which will be removed. The overall built form and position will enable the building to be successfully sited adjacent to the existing northern woodland area creating an enhanced setting with links to the main office accommodation and lodge (conference) building.

3.17 The distribution of the buildings and the decked design of the car parking sits comfortably within the existing landscape maintaining the major areas of trees and woodland. In addition, a substantial area of open space north-west of the main building and the lawned setting of the Grade II lodge is maintained, with the present unsympathetic additions to the Lodge removed. The elevations of the main building, though using repetitive elements, are enlivened by the use of the curved office roofs and core towers, visible at the stepped perimeter corners, creating a lively roofscape.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 The planning policies relevant to this consultation are set out in Government Planning Policy Guidance notes, in existing and emerging Regional Planning Guidance, in the approved Berkshire Structure Plan 1995, in the adopted Loddon Area Local Plan 1995 and in the emerging Wokingham District Local Plan.

National Guidance

4.2 Planning Policy Guidance note (PPG) 1, February 1997, provides the general policy and principles for the operation of the Town and Country Planning system in England and Wales. Paragraph 1 emphasises the key role of planning in enabling the provision of investment and jobs in a way which is consistent with the principles of sustainable development. The system:

> **"needs to be positive in promoting competitiveness..."**

4.3 PPG4, November 1992, *contains much of the later PPG1's guidance with regard to* planning principles for investment and jobs but stresses (paragraph 13):

> **"The planning system should operate on the basis that applications for development should be allowed, having regard to the development plan and all material considerations, unless the proposed development would cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance. Development control should not place unjustifiable obstacles in the way of development which is necessary to provide homes, investment and jobs ..."**

4.4 The general background to this consultation, therefore, is one where planning permission should be given unless there are good reasons why the development cannot be allowed.

Regional Guidance

4.5 Regional Planning Guidance for the South East in the form of RPG9 (March 1994), provides a framework for economic growth to maintain and develop the South East's

economic performance. RPG9 (para 3.2) requires the planning system to facilitate new developments for industry and commerce whilst meeting important principles related to sustainable development.

4.6 Revised draft regional planning guidance has recently been published for consultation. The implication for Berkshire and the Reading area is that further housing provision will be needed (a projected 3,440 additional dwellings per annum in Berkshire) over and above current Structure Plan provisions (see below).

Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006 (see Appendix 1)

4.7 The Berkshire Structure Plan (BSP) was approved in November 1995 and stands as the most up-to-date part of the statutory Development Plan pending the completion of the current draft Wokingham District Local Plan. The Plan does not propose any major new employment allocations but gives flexibility for development beyond the then existing commitments (paragraph 8.15). This flexibility is delivered by the key employment policy BU1, which is essentially the starting point for determination of this planning application.

4.8 Policy BU1 can be best addressed in three sections. First, it provides that in the case of proposals for business, industrial, distribution and storage development:

> **"permission will normally be granted where the proposal would:**
>
> .....
>
> **(iii) meet the needs of existing firms in Berkshire ..."**

The proposed development for The Met. Office, an established Berkshire firm, is *therefore from the outset one of the types of development for which permission would* normally be granted under the first part of the policy.

4.9 The second part of Policy BU1 then goes on to set provisos to the normal approach of granting planning permission for developments of this type. Permission would normally be given:

> **"provided that it does not give rise (either by itself or cumulatively with other such schemes) to:**

- **pressures for housing development additional to the *provision in this Plan; or***

- **transport problems, having regard to the capacity of the transport network, the rate at which the transport strategy is being implemented and accessibility by public transport".**

These two issues are considered the key planning issues which are explored in the next section of this Statement.

4.10 Finally, the Policy sets out two other factors to be taken into account in considering development proposals – the amount of suitable land and premises already available and the rate of completions and occupations over the Structure Plan period. Whilst both factors may have a bearing on proposals which are effectively "footloose" and therefore *able to take advantage of other premises and sites, the proposed development* by The Met Office is expressly an expansion of their existing Shinfield Park premises, sought and promoted on the basis of meeting the organisation's needs in close proximity to its other operations and to maximise efficiency in its business operations. The interpretation of this part of the policy needs to be considered alongside the next policy, BU2.

4.11 The background to Policy BU2 is set out in paragraph 8.21 which explains the desire of the Local Planning Authority to achieve a **"broad-based local economy in which local firms have opportunities to grow and prosper..."**. The policy states that:

> **"Within the provisions of Policy BU1, favourable consideration will normally be given to proposals for:**
>
> **(i) existing businesses wishing to expand in situ;..."**

The Met. Office is already established at Shinfield Park and therefore the proposed relocation both assists in the continued well being of a local firm and specifically the expansion on a site that it already occupies.

Loddon Area Local Plan 1995 (see Appendix 2)

4.12 Although not adopted until May 1995, the Loddon Area Local Plan had a long period of gestation. The Local Plan was in fact prepared in the context of the 1988 Replacement Structure Plan for Berkshire and its policies, particularly those for employment were

written to interpret and develop the policies and proposals of the 1988 Structure Plan (see paragraph 0.6 of the adopted Local Plan. Paragraph 0.7 makes it clear to which Structure Plan reference is being made). It is important to recognise that this Structure Plan provided quantitative requirements for the amount of employment-generating floorspace to be provided during the Plan period (which expired in March 1996. Paragraph 0.13 of the Local Plan expressly recognises the fact that the end date of the Plan is 1996).

4.13 In view of this, the employment policies of the adopted Local Plan do not entirely conform to the policies of the 1995 Adopted Berkshire Structure Plan. There is no provision of the Local Plan which provides flexibility to meet the needs of existing Berkshire firms, particularly those seeking to expand in situ. On the contrary, the policies apply **"extreme caution"** to the release of further employment generating development, essentially limiting such development to two major new employment sites at South Reading and North Earley (Policy PE1); to within the key Recognised Employment Areas (LE1); to one allocated small employment site (PE2) and to an extremely prescribed set of circumstances for small developments of less than 300 sq. metres (LE2). The reason for this extreme caution is explained in the first sentence of Policy LE1:

> **"In view of the exhaustion of the provisions for employment development in the Structure Plan, extreme caution is required in dealing with development proposals which result in new employment floorspace."**

4.14 In the light of this, it is apparent that the employment policies of the adopted Local Plan are of little relevance to the present application since they are time-expired and have been superseded by Policies BU1 and BU2 of the currently approved Structure Plan.

4.15 The site is notated as within a defined settlement boundary (Policy LTV1) such that development will normally be allowed subject to the provision of other policies of the Plan.

4.16 The application site is further identified on the Proposals Map (south) as within an area of low density development off Shinfield Road north of the M4. The area either side of Shinfield Road (A327) is recognised as one of a low level of development resulting from land uses in the vicinity such as European Centre for Medium Range Weather

Forecasting, Crosfields School and the former Shire Hall. The policy comments that any redevelopment of these sites or new development in the area is so designed to respect the need to maintain and enhance the wooded low density development of this prominent area.

4.17 The area of woodland to the west of the site on the scarp slope is recognised on the Proposals Map as a Wildlife Heritage Site (Policy LC9) wherein the Council will take account of nature conservation interests in determining proposals which could adversely affect them.

4.18 In the light of the age of the Plan and applicable policies especially those relating to employment it appears more relevant to look at the policies of the emerging Local Plan whilst acknowledging that these policies are still draft and are only currently subject to the Local Plan Inquiry. As a result, whilst the emerging Local Plan is of some assistance in judging the acceptability of this planning application, less weight can be given to its policies than to relevant policies of the Structure Plan.

Wokingham District Local Plan (see Appendix 3)

4.19 The Wokingham Deposit Draft Local Plan (WDLP) was published in late 1997 with proposed amendments in April 1999 and additional proposed amendments in September 1999. A Public Inquiry is presently under way. Shinfield Park is identified on the Proposals Map as within an identified settlement.

4.20 Policy WEM4 of the emerging Plan provides criteria for employment generating development within settlements but on unidentified sites. On the Proposals Map, the application site lies wholly within the defined settlement boundary. The policy provides that development will be acceptable where it conforms with the principles set out in Structure Plan Policy BU1 and conforms with development control principles in Policy WOS3. In addition, the policy states that:

> **"Favourable consideration will be given to existing businesses not causing environmental nuisance that wish to expand in situ."**

4.21 Subject to the development control policy, there is therefore no apparent reason why the proposed development by The Met. Office should be regarded as "causing

environmental nuisance". As a result, this policy follows Structure Plan Policy BU2 in giving support to the principle of expansion to meet the needs of businesses wishing to expand.

4.22 The development control policy WOS3 sets a series of criteria for judging the acceptability of development. The Policy states:

> **"The council will require all development proposals that are acceptable in principle when assessed against other policies of this plan to:**
>
> **A) be appropriate in scale of activity and character to the area in which they are located and be integrated into their local context without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers**
>
> **B) have no significant detrimental impact upon important man-made, landscape and nature conservation features and provide for further landscape treatment where relevant to the type of development and/or the protection of local visual amenity**
>
> **C) be both located and designed so as to reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport as alternatives to the car**
>
> **D) have no significant effect on road safety or cause highway, traffic generation or traffic related environmental problems**
>
> **E) provide buildings, facilities and spaces that are capable of use by people who have mobility or sensory impairment**
>
> **F) be of high quality of design that respects the local context by virtue of siting, layout, massing, materials, colour and texture."**

4.23 Of these criteria, C) and D) are related to the transport effects of the development, a matter already raised in Structure Plan Policy BU1. Criteria E) and F) are matters of detailed design, although the landscape and visual assessment of the site and the proposals enables comment to be made at this stage regarding the ability of the development in principle to meet the tests of criterion F). Criterion B) seeks to protect important features: in the case of the area intended for the proposed development, none

are identified in the Local Plan. Consequently, the key issues raised by the Policy are those contained in criterion A), which may be summarised as the ability of the development to be integrated into the site and its surroundings.

4.24 The 1997 Deposit Draft of the Wokingham Local Plan also contains a policy WBE20 entitled "Low Density Development off Shinfield Road North of the M4" which indicated that development proposals within the area identified on the Proposals Map which would be acceptable in terms of other policies in the plan should be:

> **"of a scale and character which reflects and enhances the visual appearance and character of this prominent hilltop site."**

4.25 Objections were lodged to this policy. Wokingham District Council in considering representations on the Deposit Draft Local Plan now propose to delete Policy WBE 20 (April 1999 Amendments) on the basis of the objection and in order to:

> **"take account of the strategy to make the best use of land already developed."**

4.26 In place of the deletion of Policy WBE20 it was proposed (April 1999 Amendments) that the open land at Shinfield Park to the west of the built development be designated as a Site of Urban Landscape Value under Policy WLL9. This would have afforded protection to open areas within settlements primarily in landscape terms but also in wildlife and recreational importance.

4.27 However by virtue of further objections to part of the area formerly designated as low density development now being proposed as an area of urban landscape value such a designation was removed in proposed additional amendments dated September 1999. The reason for not proceeding with the amendment was that the land in question does not meet the criteria for the designation of land as a Site of Urban Landscape Value. It failed in that there were key weaknesses of: the landscape value being visual (only as a wooded area where other controls exist); there was no public access for recreation or leisure, and that there were other policy controls in existence. It was concluded that the area was of limited landscape resource to the local community except in visual sense.

4.28 Thus there are no site specific policies relating to the application site save that the wooded area of the scarp slope to the west, which in any event will not be developed, remains as a wildlife heritage site (Policy WNC4).

5.0 PLANNING ISSUES

5.1 The following issues have arisen out of the policy considerations and are therefore addressed in turn in this section of the Statement:

1. Whether the proposed development might have any detrimental effect on the need for housing (Policy BU1, BSP);

2. What effect the proposed development will have on the transport network (Policy BU1, BSP) – dealt with in the Transport Report prepared by WSP;

3. Whether the proposed development is able to be integrated within the site and its surroundings (Policy WOS3, WDLP).

Pressure for Additional Housing Development

5.2 Policy BU1 of the Structure Plan identifies that a "careful approach" is considered appropriate to new employment generating development within the plan period in the light of the level of existing commitments and Regional Guidance which seeks a reduction in rates of growth to allow infrastructure and services to catch up with recent rapid rates of growth. However, the plan does allow for some flexibility where new development would:

> **"not unduly add to transport problems or pressures for housing development."**

It is also clear from the plan that it is not the intention of Policy BU1 to damage the economy or force the relocation of local businesses outside of the county but to seek a better balance between new employment and the demand for new housing in the area.

5.3 The Regional Guidance upon which the policy of restraint in Berkshire was built is currently under review, with SERPLAN seeking to impose similar policies on the western sector of the region to discourage inessential development which is seen as fuelling unsustainable development pressures (Areas of Economic Pressure). However, this

approach has been rejected by the Panel at the recent Examination In Public with the suggestion that problems relating to traffic congestion and labour shortages be tackled positively by,

> **"the improvement of local public transport, the elimination of congestion hot-spots and by new housebuilding (including the provision of affordable homes) within sustainable travelling distance. As a matter of general policy, neither congestion nor labour supply should be used as a reason for frustrating the proper elevation of the regional economy to world class."** (Report of the Panel into the draft Regional Planning Guidance for the South East, September 1999, paragraph 4.32).

5.4 The Public Consultation - Draft Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (March 2000) has endorsed the recommended approach of the Panel in replacing the Areas of *Economic Pressure previously proposed and instead setting out a more* positive approach to development in the Western Arc. It broadly proposes positive management to sustain the economic strengths of the area (Chapter 4 - *Core Strategy for the Region*).

5.5 Thus paragraph 4.22 states:

> **"Economic development strategies for this area should build on its economic strengths, particularly the high skill levels and *knowledge base, to ensure that the economy continues* to grow with the minimum additional pressure on limited labour or land resources. Development plans should support such strategies by ensuring that appropriate employment land is available for the businesses that need to be in the area, for example as a result of existing or emerging business clusters, as well as ensuring complementary housing and transport strategies. The positive tackling of "hotspots" or localised areas of problems, will be particularly important and further guidance is included in chapter 7."**

5.6 Policy RE8 dealing with the regional economy states, inter alia:

> **"In the Western Arc positive strategies should be developed *for areas where congestion or labour or land shortages are* constraining economic growth. "Hotspots" should be identified and specific policies developed to tackle local problems."**

With regard to such "hotspots" paragraphs 7.13 and 7.14 comment that development plans should include a range of policies to reduce or mitigate the effects of these pressures and that Local Authorities should work with partners to tackle congestion through local transport and housing strategies.

5.7 The proposed development at Shinfield Park is intended to represent a relocation from The Met. Office's existing London Road headquarters building (together with a number of other smaller local sites). Research of home locations of employees by post code on behalf of The Met. Office indicates that the majority of employees live in the Bracknell and Wokingham area. As such the development is not intended to create new jobs but rather facilitate the relocation of existing jobs from Bracknell to Shinfield. Of course it is possible that over time staff would come to live more locally or recruitment of local staff would take place.

5.8 The adopted Berkshire Structure Plan makes provision for 40,000 new dwellings in the County within the period 1991-2006. Wokingham District is expected to provide 7,750 of these new dwellings with between 2,000 and 2,500 located south of the M4 motorway.

5.9 During the preparation of the Structure Plan it was recognised that employment generating opportunities within the Reading area would exceed the supply of new housing capable of being provided within Reading Borough itself. As a consequence therefore, the area to the south of the M4 motorway in Wokingham District was selected as the most appropriate location for new housing development which would be well-located in terms of access into Reading and would minimise environmental damage.

5.10 Three potential development areas to the south of the M4 motorway have recently been considered at a year long inquiry. All three locations are within easy travelling distance of Shinfield Park and would offer the opportunity for employees to walk, cycle or use public transport as a means of travelling to work in preference to travelling by car. The opportunity for encouraging sustainable travel to and from the Shinfield Park site therefore exists in relation to the new housing development proposed south of the M4 motorway.

5.12 By allowing The Met. Office to expand their operations on their existing site, the opportunity is offered to reduce travel by private car and encourage the use of public

transport amongst The Met. Office employees. The close proximity of the proposed development to the new housing to the south of the M4 will also offer opportunities for employees to live and work in the same general area in the longer term thus further encouraging the use of sustainable modes of travel. Finally, government guidance promotes making the best use of urban land. Shinfield Park is already a developed site within an urban area. By allowing the construction of a new building the use of the site is intensified without environmental harm, offering further economies of scale.

5.13 With regard to the future of The Met. Office's London Road, Bracknell site this will be the subject of a planning brief to be prepared in conjunction with Bracknell Forest Borough Council. It is envisaged that a mixed use redevelopment could take place on the site, including opportunities for new housing which may make a positive contribution to the balance between housing and employment in the Bracknell area.

Integration of the Development Within the Site and its Surroundings

5.14 The new main headquarters building is likely to be located within an area presently occupied by existing buildings. Such a location has been chosen to avoid environmental disturbance as far as possible, and to respect the setting of the listed building.

5.15 The landscape and visual appraisal prepared by Barton Willmore Environmental examines in detail the impact of the development within the context of Policy WOS3 and concludes that:

- the site has a high degree of visual enclosure provided by perimeter woodland and tree belt planting. This minimises any potential for detrimental impact on the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers;

- the proposed development would be seen in the context of the existing Foster Wheeler building and the European Weather Centre building. It has been designed to be in scale and character with the local area and to relate to important man-made, landscape and nature conservation features on site. It would be assimilated into the existing landscape setting.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Met. Office is an international organisation whose headquarters in the UK have been located in Bracknell since the early 1960's. The organisation has a well established presence in Bracknell and has contributed to the economy of the County for many years.

6.2 The organisation is presently based in a number of separate buildings within Bracknell Town Centre and at Shinfield Park and Beaufort Park. A decision has been taken to concentrate operations in a single new headquarters building.

6.3 The Met. Office is therefore seeking to consult in outline for a new headquarters complex 37,160 sq.m. under Department of the Environment Circular 18/84. To assist the local planning authority, illustrative proposals are provided to show the possible location and appearance of the proposed new building.

6.4 The current consultation therefore seeks to address the relocation needs of an existing Berkshire organisation on a site which already provides for the staff college. Whilst the current planning policy framework in Berkshire seeks to restrain new employment generating development, provision is made for the growth of local companies and organisations where such development would not have an adverse effect upon demands for additional housing or create transport problems.

6.5 In terms of pressure for additional housing, the proposal essentially represents a relocation of existing staff from Bracknell. However, with 2,500 new homes planned in Wokingham District just to the south of the M4 within easy travelling distance by public transport, cycle or foot of the Shinfield Park site, the proposed development would be well located relative to new housing should this arise in the longer term and offers the opportunity for travel by a range of modes.

6.6 Transport issues are dealt with in a separate report, which sets out the framework for a Green Transport Plan for the site. The report concludes that Shinfield Park is an appropriate site for the relocation of The Met. Office, in providing an opportunity to

implement national and local transport policies for the reduction in car use whilst providing local highway benefits.

6.7 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal has concluded that the proposed development has been sensitively designed and located to respect the existing landscape setting and to be assimilated into the local area without detriment to local amenities.

6.8 Overall therefore, although there may be a small increase in the travel to work pattern these are considered to be outweighed by the benefits to the economy of Berkshire of retaining and expanding an international organisation which has developed in Berkshire and now employs some 1,400 individuals.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1	-	Extracts from Berkshire Structure Plan 1991 - 2006
Appendix 2	-	Extracts from Loddon Area Local Plan 1995
Appendix 3	-	Extracts from Deposit Draft Wokingham District Local Plan 1997 and 1999 Amendments.

LIST OF DRAWINGS

Drawing No. 9906/P1	-	Site Location Plan
Drawing No. SK007B	-	Site/Building Footprint Layout
Drawing No. SK008	-	Typical Section and Elevation

BERKSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN 1991 - 2006

Adopted by Berkshire County Council 4 November 1995

December 1995
Price: £15.00

ISBN 1 85163 059 7

Bracknell Forest Borough	121,520 sq.m. plus 12.0 hectares
Newbury District	180,160 sq.m. plus 15.6 hectares
Reading Borough	237,730 sq.m. plus 6.6 hectares
Slough Borough	131,400 sq.m.
Royal Borough of Windsor & M'head	17,750 sq.m.
Wokingham District	237,570 sq.m.
Berkshire	**926,130 sq.m. plus 34.2 hectares**

In addition to the above commitments, there are a number of sites being proposed in draft local plans. Approximately 13,400 sq.m. of BIDS floorspace could be built on such sites identified at March 1994.

Further Business and Industrial Development

8.15 Although the County Council is not proposing any major new allocations for business, industrial, distribution and storage development it considers that some flexibility needs to be made for development beyond the existing provision. Policy BU1 therefore gives some scope for development additional to the provisions in paragraph 8.14 where it would not unduly add to transport problems or pressures for housing development. The flexibility afforded by Policy BU1, together with the substantial amount of floorspace already committed or currently vacant, will help the County to retain its prosperity and attractiveness for investment. It will also allow opportunities for businesses to expand, premises to be modernised or redeveloped and jobs lost in declining industries to be replaced. It will assist urban regeneration and the re-use of urban land in line with Government guidance[1] and will also allow more flexibility for the provision of local services and for helping the needs of the local labour force.

8.16 However, the County Council is concerned to ensure that a significant intensification of employment uses is avoided in many areas. Many of the existing industrial areas in Berkshire have experienced considerable change and redevelopment in recent years, often leading to additional floorspace and the replacement of traditional industrial and warehousing premises by more intensively occupied business premises. These trends have been encouraged by the flexibility offered by the 1987 Use Classes Order. The result has in many cases been a significant intensification of employment potential which has added to transport problems, additional labour supply demands and associated pressures for additional housing. It has also led to a reduction in the variety of premises available (see paragraph 8.21).

8.17 The redevelopment and intensification of large research and other institutional establishments in rural locations can also lead to significantly increased employment, drawing workers from a wider area, increasing traffic flows and the length of journeys to work, contrary to the objectives of sustainable development. The following policy therefore deals with redevelopment and changes of use as well as new sites.

---

1 *Advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG4) 'Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms'*

Assessment of Proposals for Further Business, Industrial, Distribution and Storage Development

Policy BU1 In considering proposals for business, industrial, distribution and storage development other than that already committed, permission will normally be granted where the proposal would :

(i) aid urban regeneration;

(ii) contribute (when compared with existing or committed development) towards meeting the employment needs of the local population in the County, including the rural areas;

(iii) meet the needs of existing firms in Berkshire, including small businesses; or

(iv) meet the need for a particular type of business which would serve the local economy and which cannot be accommodated in existing or committed premises;

provided that it does not give rise (either by itself or cumulatively with other such schemes) to:

- pressures for housing development additional to the provision in this Plan; or

- transport problems, having regard to the capacity of the transport network, the rate at which the transport strategy is being implemented and accessibility by public transport;

Other factors to be taken into account in considering proposals will include:

- the amount of suitable land and premises already available, including development that is committed or agreed in principle and property that is being marketed at the time:

- the rate of completions and occupation of premises over the Structure Plan period, and changing densities of occupation.

8.18 Policy BU1 allows for local considerations to be taken into account. The County Council will be providing further guidance on the interpretation of Policy BU1 and will work with the local planning authorities to produce regular statements on the current state of the economy to assist with the implementation of the policy. The weight given to each criterion in the policy will depend upon local circumstances.

8.19 The use of the term 'urban regeneration' in the context of Policy BU1 does not imply the acceptance of wholesale redevelopment of BIDS uses in urban areas, as this could lead to the unacceptable intensification of activities and a loss of variety of types of premises and uses. Rather, it is the targeted redevelopment of existing underused, vacant and derelict land and premises where this is appropriate in accordance with other policies in this Plan. Urban regeneration also includes the redevelopment of older BIDS premises which due to age and specification may not be suitable for the modern needs of business and industry.

8.20 Particular attention will be given to proposals for major additional floorspace. The distinction between major and small scale developments may vary in different parts of the County, according to local circumstances and definitions adopted in local plans, but normally a major development will be one involving a net increase in floorspace of 500 sq.m. and over.

MAINTAINING A VARIETY OF PREMISES

8.21 The County Council is seeking a broad-based local economy in which local firms have opportunities to grow and prosper, and local people have access to a wide range of job opportunities. Although rentals may have fallen over the last few years, high rental and land values limit the supply of reasonably priced premises for small or recently established firms, and can lead to an over-emphasis on floorspace for office and business uses at the expense of industry, storage and distribution (a trend reinforced by changes in planning legislation).

8.22 Local planning policies can provide valuable assistance in controlling the scale and type of development and redevelopment. Measures that help achieve a variety of sizes and types of premises, a range of uses and the retention of areas for industrial and warehousing activities, as well as controls on the height, mass and density of development, are particularly welcomed.

8.23 While planning policies are only one of the factors that can influence the range of types and sizes of premises that are provided, encouragement can be given, where appropriate, to proposals which assist the maintenance of a balanced local economy and provide for the expansion of local firms.

Provision of a Variety of Premises

Policy BU2 **Within the provisions of Policy BU1, favourable consideration will normally be given to proposals for :**

(i) existing businesses wishing to expand in situ;

(ii) the provision of a range of small units;

(iii) the provision of industrial, distribution and storage units.

8.24 This policy seeks to guide any future employment development towards meeting the needs of existing local firms and providing a wide range of job opportunities, rather than an excessive provision of business (office) development. Small industrial starter or nursery units of less than 100 sq m each will be particularly encouraged. Where proposals involve the provision of smaller units the County Council will support measures by the local planning authorities to ensure that the units are not subsequently amalgamated without their prior agreement.

8.25 In the case of development and redevelopment within existing industrial areas an over-emphasis on the provision of office premises and a reduction in the variety of uses should be avoided. A range of types and sizes of premises should be provided wherever possible. Proposals involving development for business use can also contribute to achieving a variety of activities if their design enables a range of activities to be accommodated.

OTHER USES FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL LAND AND PREMISES

8.26 In order to achieve other desirable planning objectives such as the provision of low-cost housing, or to seek sustainable locations for development, the County Council will, where appropriate, support the re-use or redevelopment of business, industrial, distribution or storage premises or sites to other uses such as housing (including the conversion of offices to flats), recreation, or social and community facilities. Proposals should meet the requirements of other policies and objectives in this Plan and in local plans.

8.27 Regard will also need to be paid to the concern to maintain a balanced local economy with a wide range of job opportunities and a variety of premises, including small units. although in some areas changes from BIDS to other uses may help to reduce the potential mismatch between jobs and local labour supply referred to in paragraph 8.10. The County Council will oppose development which adversely affects the availability of industrial and warehousing land and premises, and the locally available range of job opportunities. The Council will resist redevelopment to other uses of sites and premises which it considers to be of more benefit to the needs of the local economy where retained in BIDS uses.

Development Proposals Involving Other Uses for Business, Industrial, Distribution and Storage Land and Premises

Policy BU3 **Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of business, industrial, distribution or storage premises, or sites proposed for such uses, to other uses will be encouraged in appropriate circumstances as defined in local plans, providing there is no unacceptable adverse impact on the availability of industrial and warehousing land and premises and on the locally available range of job opportunities. Permissions for business, industrial, distribution or storage uses will not be automatically renewed without a review of the continued justification for the development proposed, having regard to the considerations listed in Policy BU1, and other material considerations including the suitability of the site for alternative uses.**

8.28 In all cases permitted in accordance with Policy BU3, the County Council will normally oppose any proposals to replace on other sites the resulting loss of floorspace and areas, unless they comply with the considerations listed in Policy BU1, in view of the substantial existing commitment to BIDS development and concerns about the potential imbalance between the anticipated increase in jobs and the labour supply available locally.

LODDON AREA LOCAL PLAN

Adopted 5 May 1995



Published by: Wokingham District Council
Planning Department
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1WR
Telephone: (01734) 778798
Fax: (01734) 778735

LODDON AREA LOCAL PLAN

PROPOSALS MAP (SOUTH) MAY 1995

BERK/7/108

LEGEND

	Policy/Proposal Nos.
Local Plan Boundary	
Identified Settlement	LTV1
Proposed Housing Site	LH2,PWE10,PW1, PW2,PW3,PW4, PW5,PS2,PS4
Existing Housing Commitment	PWE1
Low Density Development	LS2
Transitional Area	LTV5
Site of Urban Landscape Value	LWE4
New Employment Site	PE1,PE2,PS3
Recognised Employment Area	LE1
General Industrial Area	LE3
Rural Area	LTV2
Separation of Settlements	LC1
Setting of Settlements	LC2

Setting of Settlements	LC2
Area of Special Landscape Importance	LC3,LC4,LC5
Area of Sporadic Development	LTV2
Open Space	PWE2,PWE3,LW1, PW12,PW13
Wildlife Heritage Site	LC9
Historic Park or Garden	LBE19
Area of Traditional Local Character	LBE16,LS5
Proposed Conservation Area	PW14
Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserve	LC8
Scheduled Ancient Monument/Site of Regional or County Importance	LBE20,LBE21
Site/Area of Archaeological Potential	LBE20,LBE21, LBE22
Area Liable to Flooding	LPS2,LPS3
River Valleys Policies Area	LRV3,LRV4
Road Proposal	PS3,PW6
Road Improvement	LT4
Environmental Enhancement Scheme	LBE4
Community and Education Facilities	PWE3
Commercial and Shopping Development	PW8,PWE4
Footpath/Greenway	PRV7,LWE3
Footpath/Cycleway	PS1

■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Footpath/Greenway	PRV7,LWE3
■ ○ ■ ○ ■	Footpath/Cycleway	PS1
(VG)	Town or Village Green	LC13
(C)	Common Land	LC13
	Arborfield Garrison	LS4

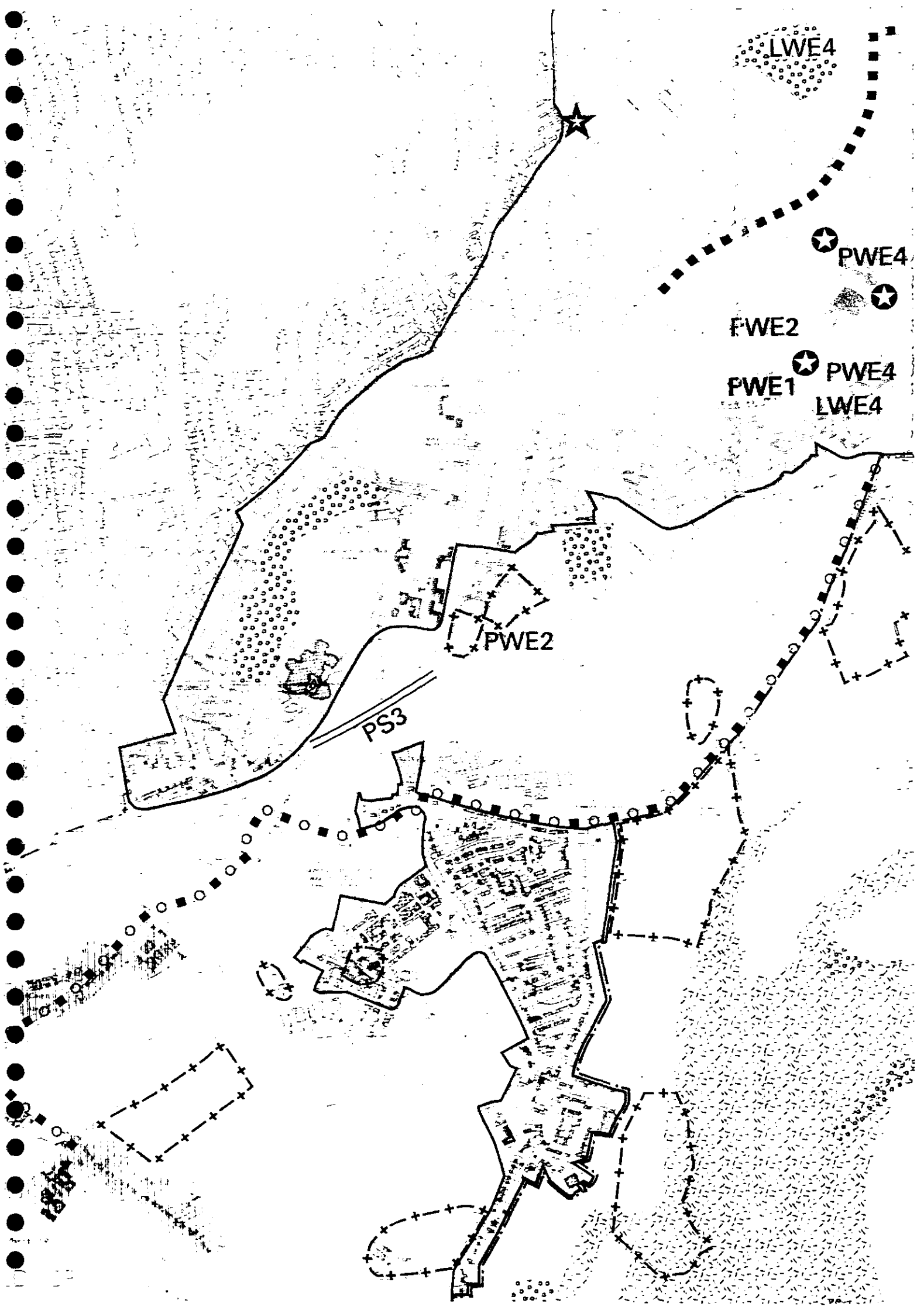
NOTE: CROSS HATCHING OF COLOURS INDICATES THAT POLICIES OVERLAP

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

Scale 1:12,500

0 500 1000 metres

N


LWE4
PWE4
PWE2
PWE1
PWE4
LWE4
PWE2
PS3

INTRODUCTION



THE NEED FOR THE PLAN

0.1 Strong pressures for growth throughout Wokingham District mean that there is a need for clear local policies to guide development. The pressure is particularly strong in the rural areas adjacent to the boundaries of major settlements where the Loddon Valley is important as the lung of countryside which defines the edges of Woodley and Earley and, in the wider context, the southern and eastern boundaries of Reading.

0.2 This plan aims to provide the local policies for the area and to complement the Wokingham District South East Area Local Plan and Berkshire Green Belt Local Plan which provide a similar function for the remainder of Wokingham District. The local plan has been prepared in the context of a local plan brief which was published in December 1985.

THE PLAN AREA

0.3 The area covered by the plan is shown in outline on Map 1 at the front of the document. The detailed boundaries can be found on the two Proposals Maps. The plan covers the parishes of Wargrave, Twyford, Ruscombe and St. Nicholas Hurst except for those parts in the Green Belt. It also includes the whole of the parishes of Sonning, Charvil, Woodley, Earley, Winnersh, Shinfield, Arborfield and Swallowfield. Barkham parish is also included with the exception of an area east of Bearwood Road which is within the South East Area Local Plan.

0.4 The plan area is unified by the presence of the River Loddon running through it from Swallowfield to Wargrave. The river valley is important both in defining the extent of the urban areas east and south of Reading and in providing a source of countryside recreation opportunities to the residents of the plan area and beyond.

THE AIMS OF THE PLAN

0.5 The overall aim of the plan is to provide the land use policies which will maintain, and where possible improve, the quality of life and the character and environment of the plan area. By controlling the level and type of development taking place and by planning positively for appropriate changes, the plan aims to maintain a balance between town and country which meets the identified needs for development in the area without irretrievable damage to its quality and character.

0.6 Within this overall aim there are a number of specific objectives. These are:

❖ *to interpret and develop the policies and proposals of the Replacement Structure Plan for Berkshire as they apply to the plan area, including the identification of land for development purposes where required.*

❖ *to assess and review the impact of current and proposed major development on the character and infrastructure of the urban areas.*

❖ *to safeguard and enhance the landscape character and natural resources of the area and control development in the countryside and on the edges of towns and villages.*

❖ *to bring forward comprehensive policies for the Loddon Valley.*

❖ *to assess the needs and bring forward land use policies for the control and development of recreation and tourism in the plan area.*

❖ *to maintain and enhance the character of the built environment.*

❖ *to identify transportation problems in the plan area and bring forward land use policies for their solution.*

❖ *to bring forward proposals to ensure a satisfactory range of housing provision and employment opportunities in the plan area.*

❖ *to assess the land use and environmental problems arising within the existing built-up parts of the plan area and bring forward policies and proposals to deal with them.*

❖ *to realise improvements in infrastructure and services from development.*

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

0.7 The policies and proposals of the Loddon Area Local Plan must generally conform with the Replacement Structure Plan for Berkshire. This Replacement Structure Plan was approval by the Secretary of State for the Environment in November 1988. This local plan therefore has the benefit of the most up to date strategic background. The policies and proposals in the local plan, whilst amplifying the Structure Plan policies and proposals, do not replace them and the Structure Plan itself will also be used by the District Council in its consideration of development in the area covered by this local plan.

0.8 There are already two statutory local plans which affect the whole of the Loddon area. They are the Berkshire Minerals Local Plan and the Berkshire Countryside Recreation Local Plan. Both of these apply to the whole of Berkshire and are concerned with the limited topics represented by their titles. In providing a comprehensive land use plan for the Loddon Area it is inevitable that this plan considers aspects of minerals and countryside recreation planning. As in the case of the Replacement Structure Plan, this plan will not replace them and the relationship between them is made clear at appropriate points in the document.

0.9 There have been a number of non-statutory village plans and district plans which were used to provide local planning policies in the Loddon area. Since the time this plan was approved for Development Control purposes they ceased to have effect. The plans concerned are:

Woodley and Earley Master Plan - 1972
Charvil Village Plan - 1973
Twyford Village Plan - 1973
Winnersh Local Plan - 1975
Wargrave Village Plan - 1975
Loddon Valley Southern Sector Report - 1975
Spencers Wood District Plan - 1979
Hurst District Plan - 1981
Swallowfield District Plan - 1981
Winnersh Interim Review of Development Control Policies - 1981.

0.10 The Loddon Area Local Plan aims to provide all of the policies needed for the effective control and management of development in the plan area. However, there will still be a need for further supplementary planning guidance which will not form a part of the plan itself. This will take two forms, development control guidelines and development briefs. Development control guidelines further interpret the local plan policies in the context of planning applications. The District Council has already approved and published such guidelines which are regularly revised to meet changing circumstances. Development briefs are required in areas where major or complex developments are taking place to provide a detailed interpretation of the local plan policies.

0.11 Development briefs already exist for the following sites in the plan area. These will remain in force following adoption of this local plan.

1.1 TOWNS, VILLAGES AND RURAL AREAS



BACKGROUND

1.1.01 [illegible] locational advantages. [illegible] designation as a major [illegible] an intensification [illegible] built up areas and [illegible] of settlements [illegible] countryside and [illegible] on existing [illegible]

1.1.02 The Borough Council supports the [illegible] aim of achieving a decrease in [illegible] rates to prevent progressive [illegible] and a deterioration of the environment and to enable problems with service provision and infrastructure to be dealt with. The Secretary of State's acknowledgement that the central part of Berkshire should no longer be regarded as a major growth area is particularly welcomed. Such considerations form the basis for the general policies outlined in this chapter of the plan.

THE EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENTS

1.1.03 The plan area contains a number of settlements of varying history, ranging from Sonning which is believed to have been in existence as far back as the seventh century to Lower Earley for which outline planning permission was granted in 1977 and which is now nearing completion. The role of many of the settlements within the Loddon area has changed over time, and with it, the rate of growth: for example, Twyford remained an agriculturally based settlement until the opening of the Great Western Railway in the 1840's. The inter and post war periods have seen a marked increase in the rate of growth of many of the settlements, some of that growth occurring in the unfortunate form of ribbon development along highways. The policies contained in this plan have been formulated to prevent such environmentally damaging development occurring in the future.

DEFINITION OF IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS

1.1.04 The definition of rural areas is dependent on the definition of settlements and vice versa. The Loddon area is characterised by settlements of varying size and nature. Some settlements involve very few properties and/or are dominated by areas of undeveloped rural land causing them to be characterised by a loose settlement pattern. Such villages often possess a number of basic services, such as a school or church although these are rarely confined to serving the population of the village. The open nature of these villages presents many opportunities for further development in the form of filling in the gaps. However, it is considered that if such development were to occur, the existing special character of these villages would be detrimentally affected. For the purposes of this

plan, a village is not synonymous with an identified settlement, the latter being used to define an area where particular planning policies are appropriate. There will therefore be cases where parts of villages have been excluded from the identified settlement, for example, small groups of development on the far side of a road that marks the boundary of the main built up area of the village. In order to be consistent in the treatment of settlements of similar size, function and character, it has been necessary to draw up a definition for settlements warranting identification on the Proposals Map.

1.1.05 An 'identified' settlement or built-up area must possess all the following characteristics:-

(i) a sizeable amount of development in a compact form. (If development is interspersed with areas of land which are characteristically rural or open, this will not come within this criterion);

(ii) possess a range of basic services, such as a school, shop and community facilities, providing a forum for social contact;

(iii) be physically and socially cohesive.

On this basis the following policy is put forward.

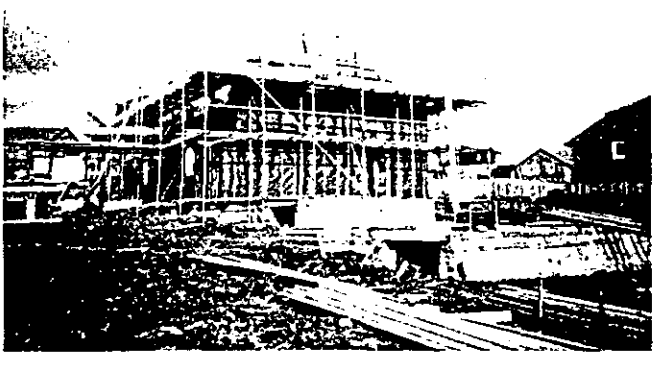
❖ *LTV1 'IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS'*

WITHIN THE IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS AS LISTED BELOW AND AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, DEVELOPMENT WILL NORMALLY BE ALLOWED, SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF OTHER POLICIES CONTAINED IN THIS PLAN. THE 'IDENTIFIED' SETTLEMENTS ARE:-

ARBORFIELD CROSS
BARKHAM HILL
CHARVIL
EARLEY/SONNING/WOODLEY
HURST
RISELEY
SHINFIELD
SINDLESHAM
SPENCERS WOOD
SWALLOWFIELD
THREE MILE CROSS
TWYFORD
WARGRAVE
WINNERSH

LIMITING THE SPREAD OF DEVELOPMENT

1.1.06 The District Council recognises the need to maintain an acceptable level of environmental quality and considers that the maintenance of a clear distinction between built-up areas and the countryside is fundamental to achieving this aim. Such an approach helps to ensure that individual settlements retain their identity and that the open and rural character of land outside the boundaries of identified settlements is retained. Accordingly it is intended to limit development outside identified settlements to that which is appropriate to the countryside or has a special reason to locate there. Although these uses are acceptable in principle, they must also be acceptable in practice. This is particularly important in the case of small scale housing and employment development on the edge of settlements which is dealt with in more detail in policies LH1 and LE2.



❖ *LTV2 DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS*

ALL LAND OUTSIDE THE IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP IS CONSIDERED TO BE RURAL AREA WITHIN WHICH DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE ALLOWED. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE

[illegible] identified through further surveys [illegible] will be given to them in the [illegible] proposals being put forward which [illegible]. However much of the loss of [illegible] woodlands in recent years has been to [illegible] replanting and the District Council [illegible] notification of, or has any control over, [illegible]

❖ LC9 WILDLIFE HERITAGE SITES

IN RESPECT OF THE WILDLIFE HERITAGE SITES [illegible] ON THE PROPOSALS MAP THE DISTRICT [illegible] WILL TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE NATURE [illegible] INTEREST IN DETERMINING [illegible] FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH COULD [illegible] AFFECT THEM. WHERE THE SITE IS [illegible] TO BE OF SUFFICIENT NATURE [illegible] IMPORTANCE ANY PROPOSAL [illegible] LEAD TO DAMAGE SUFFICIENT [illegible] OR ADVERSELY AFFECT THAT [illegible] WOULD BE NORMALLY REFUSED.



1.3.27 Maintaining the habitat value of the countryside in the plan area will not be achieved by only protecting the best and rarest habitats. The overall richness and diversity of the wildlife interest depends on the amount and variety of habitats available in the plan area as a whole and not merely the presence of sites which can be specifically identified. It is therefore important that the nature conservation implications of development in the countryside be considered in each case and the impacts be balanced with the need for the development and other considerations. Where proposals which are otherwise acceptable could be modified to reduce the impact on wildlife habitats, or where restoration or landscaping schemes could be introduced to create new habitats, this should be encouraged.

❖ LC10 NATURE CONSERVATION IN THE WIDER COUNTRYSIDE

IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD AFFECT WILDLIFE HABITATS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS AND, WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS OTHERWISE ACCEPTABLE, WILL SEEK TO AMELIORATE THAT IMPACT AND ENSURE, WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE CREATION AND FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF NEW HABITATS FOR WILDLIFE. IF THE SITE PROVES TO BE OF SUFFICIENT NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE ANY PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD LEAD TO DAMAGE SUFFICIENT TO REMOVE OR ADVERSELY AFFECT THAT IMPORTANCE WILL BE REFUSED.

1.3.28 New development also provides the opportunity of creative conservation and the District Council will seek the improvement of existing sites or creation of new sites in conjunction with developments. A specific example of this concept is the creation of a nature reserve in conjunction with a major business development proposal at North Earley/West Sonning (See Proposal PRV4).

1.5.09 In the South of Reading allocation, provision has been made for a significant amount of industrial, distribution and storage uses (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8). These uses generate a large number of movements by heavy goods vehicles. Their location in this area, with its excellent access to the motorway network, will assist in limiting the unnecessary penetration of urban areas by heavy goods vehicles, and help to reduce the adverse environmental impact in residential areas.

RECOGNISED EMPLOYMENT AREAS

1.5.10 The nature of industrial development in Berkshire is changing, and many firms now require higher specification premises than traditional industrial and warehousing uses. In addition, many new firms require premises which allow flexible use of floorspace to accommodate a range of uses. The revised policies in the Explanatory Memorandum of the Structure Plan, and the accompanying Interpretation of the employment policies in the Approved Structure Plan set aside certain existing industrial/warehousing areas as 'Recognised Employment Areas' where increases in floorspace would not be controlled. Such areas have been identified in the Plan in accordance with strategic guidance using criteria relating to size, environment, planning background and site history. Since this policy was produced, there have been considerable changes in the context of employment policies. The amount of employment development which has taken place has resulted in overcommitment; moreover, 94% of the commitment at March 1992 is for B1 business use. Consequently, the Council is concerned that restraint should be exercised in relation to all further employment development. At the same time, it is concerned that the dominance of business use should not prevent the provision of premises for small and traditional firms; in this it is supported by recent government legislation. To this end, part two of the policy is aimed at encouraging a range of uses and a variety of sizes and types of buildings.

❖ LE1 RECOGNISED EMPLOYMENT AREAS

IN VIEW OF THE EXHAUSTION OF THE PROVISIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE STRUCTURE PLAN, EXTREME CAUTION IS REQUIRED IN DEALING WITH DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH RESULT IN NEW EMPLOYMENT FLOORSPACE. WITHIN THE RECOGNISED AREAS OF WOODLEY AIRFIELD EMPLOYMENT AREA, NORTH EARLEY EMPLOYMENT AREA, AND THE MANOR EMPLOYMENT AREA, SHINFIELD AND NORTH EARLEY, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL GENERALLY BE ACCEPTABLE IN PRINCIPLE PROVIDED THEY INVOLVE:

A) SMALL SCALE SCHEMES PROVIDING AN INCREASE IN FLOOR SPACE OF LESS THAN 300 SQUARE METRES;
B) EXTENSIONS TO THE PREMISES OF EXISTING FIRMS;
C) CHANGES OF USE WITHIN EXISTING PREMISES;
D) REDEVELOPMENTS OF EXISTING PREMISES WHICH RESULT IN LESS THAN 300 SQUARE METRES INCREASE IN FLOORSPACE;
E) THERE ARE NO OVERRIDING TRANSPORT OBJECTIONS;
F) THERE ARE NO OVERRIDING ENVIRONMENTAL OR OTHER OBJECTIONS DUE TO THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED USES ON NEIGHBOURING LAND USES, ON THE LANDSCAPE, OR ON THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA.

ENCOURAGEMENT WILL ALSO BE GIVEN TO THE PROVISION WHERE APPROPRIATE OF :
A RANGE OF USES, INCLUDING LIGHT/GENERAL INDUSTRIAL, DISTRIBUTION AND STORAGE USES; AND
A VARIETY OF SIZES AND TYPES OF BUILDING, INCLUDING SMALL STARTER UNITS.

Wokingham **District Local Plan**

Deposit Draft 1997

Published by: Wokingham District Council
Planning Department
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1WR
Telephone 0118 9778798
Fax 0118 9778735

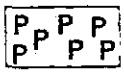
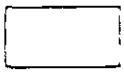
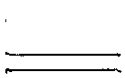
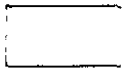
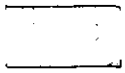
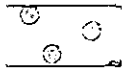
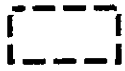
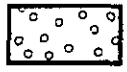
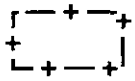
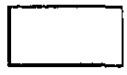
Wokingham District Local Plan 1996-2006 Deposit Draft 1997

PROPOSALS MAP (SOUTH-WEST)

Please refer to reverse of this sheet for Proposals Map (South-East)

LEGEND

	Policy/Proposal
District Boundary	
Identified Settlement	WOS2
Proposed Priority Housing Site	WH2
Proposed Reserve Housing Site	WH2
Low Density Development	WBE20
Public Open Space	WR2
Site of Urban Landscape Value	WLL9
Proposed Employment Site	WEM1
Core Employment Site	WEM2
Employment: University of Reading	WEM5, WEM6
Employment: Uses Causing Detrimental Impact	WEM9
Employment: General Industrial/Storage Area	WEM12
Proposed Site for Mixed Use	WSH20, WSH21, WSH27, WSH28, WSH32
Proposed Site for Office Use	WSH22, WSH24, WSH32
Proposed Site for Education Use	WSH23
Proposed Site for Leisure Use	WSH24, WSH26
Arborfield Garrison	WBE21
Proposed Grazeley Housing Site	WSM1

	Arborfield Garrison	WBE21
	Proposed Grazeley Housing Site	WSM1
	Landscaping/Forest/Recreation Areas in Relation to Grazeley Housing Site	WSM1
	Proposed Park and Ride	WSM1, WT11
	Green Belt	WGB1 to WGB10
	*Major Development Site in the Green Belt*	WGB7
	Countryside	WCC1, WCC4, WCC5, WCC6, WCC7
	Green Gap/Wedge	WCC2
	Setting of Settlement	WLL6
	Area of Special Landscape Importance	WLL2, WLL3
	Proposed Country Park	WR15, WR16
	Country Park in Progress	
	Employment: Reading Business Park	WEM3
	National Trust Land	
	Proposed Central Berkshire Forest	WCC3
	Thames River Valley	WLL4
	Other River Valleys	WLL5
	Site of Special Scientific Interest	WNC1
	Wildlife Heritage Site	WNC4
	Wildlife Heritage Site (River)	WNC4
	Proposed Conservation Area	WHE1
	Conservation Area	WHE2 *to* WHE5, WBE17, WBE18
	Area of Special Character	WHE6 to WHE8
	Historic Park or Garden	WHE9
	Archaeological Site	WHE15, WHE17
	Scheduled Ancient Monument	WHE16, WHE17
	Green Route	WBE12
	Green Route Enhancement Area	WBE12
	Town Centre Boundary	WSH1, WT6
		

70

69

68



Town Centre Boundary — WSH1, WT6

Retail Centre — WSH5

Local Shopping Centre

Shopping Facilities in Winnersh — WSH18

Primary Shopping Frontage — WSH6

Secondary Shopping Frontage — WSH7

Reinstatement of Shopping Frontage — WSH8

WSH1 WSH5

Proposed Environmental Improvement to Local or Neighbourhood Shopping Centre — WSH16

Wargrave High Street — WSH17

Proposed Environmental Improvement to Town Centre — WSH19

Proposed Community Use — WSH25, WIC4, WIC5, WIC6

Proposed Service Road Provision — WSH29

Pedestrian Priority — WSH30

Proposed Public Open Space — WR5

Proposed Greenway — WR6

Proposed Recreational Facility — WR11, WR22, WR23

Proposed Car Park — WR17

Proposed Footpath (Riverside) — WR19

Proposed Cycle Route — WT10

Proposed Improvements to Existing Railway Station — WT13

Proposed Railway Station — WT14

Proposed Major Road Scheme — WT15

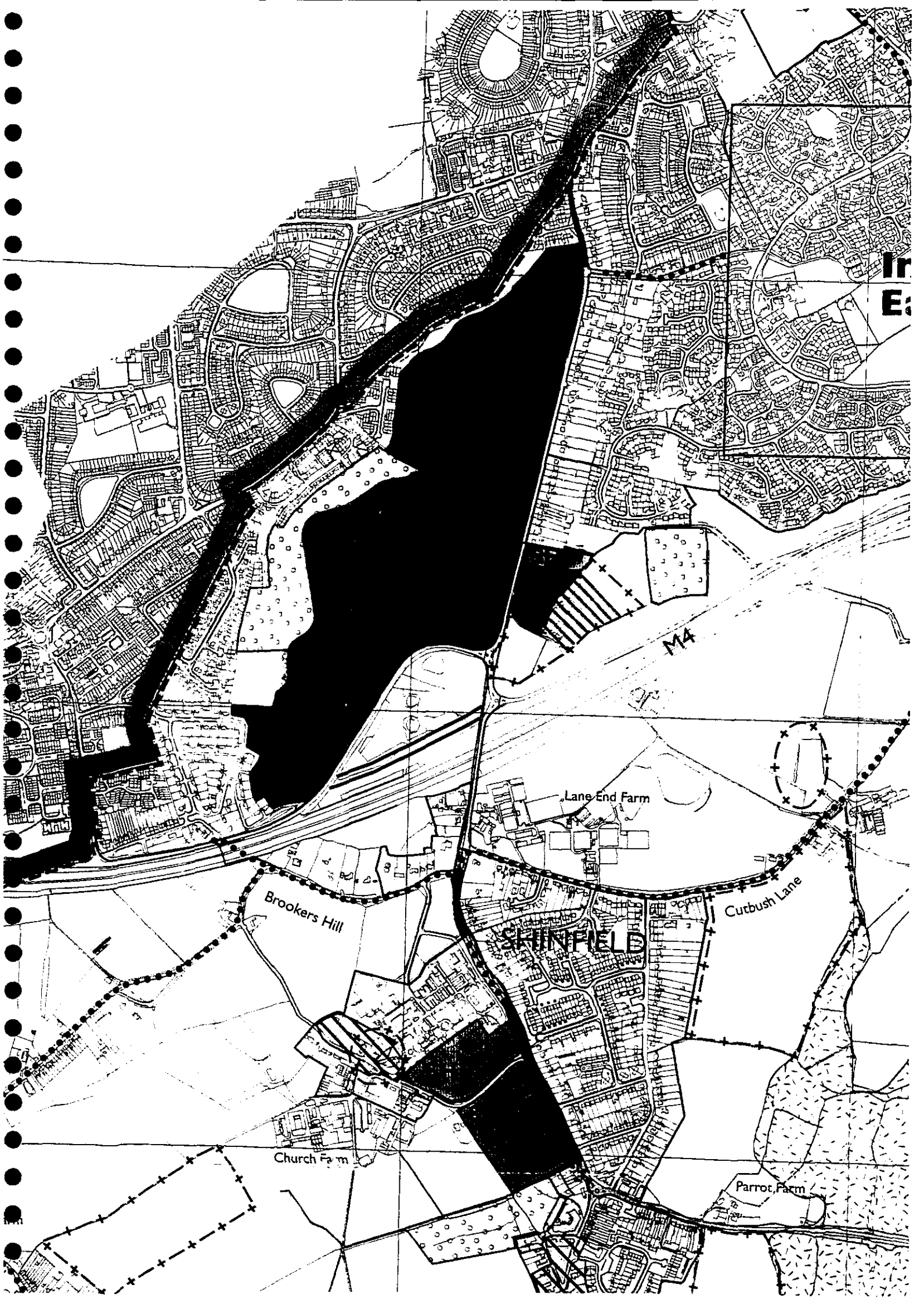
Proposed Road Improvement — WT16

Land Liable to Flooding — WIC16

N

Scale 1:10 000

0 200 400 600 800 1000 metres


M4
Lane End Farm
Brookers Hill
SHINFIELD
Cutbush Lane
Church Farm
Parrot Farm

IS CONSERVED WHILST PROVIDING APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTS WHICH MEET LOCAL NEEDS

b) GIVE PRIORITY WITHIN a) TO MEETING THE DISTRICT'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL NEEDS, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF LOW-COST HOUSING AND A WIDER RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

c) CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE PATTERN OF TOWN AND PARISH COMMUNITIES BY RETAINING AND EMPHASISING THE BALANCE BETWEEN TOWNS AND VILLAGES, COUNTRYSIDE AND SETTLEMENTS, OPEN RIVER VALLEYS AND ENCLOSED WOODLANDS

d) TO PROVIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, SHOPPING AND SERVICES IN PLACES THAT MINIMISE THE NEED FOR TRAVEL BY PRIVATE CAR

e) THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER, ENVIRONMENT, LANDSCAPE, HERITAGE WITHIN THE PLAN AREA

f) TO CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES TO MINIMISE POLLUTION

g) TO SEEK IMPROVEMENTS TO INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES AND AMENITIES.

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Planning applications determined.

Limiting the Spread of Development

1.6 The Council recognises the need to maintain an acceptable level of environmental quality and considers that the maintenance of a clear distinction between built-up areas and the countryside is fundamental to achieving this aim. Such an approach helps to ensure that individual settlements retain their identity and that the open and rural character of land outside the boundaries of identified settlements is retained. Accordingly it is intended to limit development outside identified settlements to that which is appropriate to the countryside or has special reason to locate there. Although these uses are acceptable in principle, they must also be acceptable in practice.

1.7 In order to be consistent in the treatment of settlements having common characteristics, it has been necessary to draw up a definition of the classification of settlements as used in the policies and proposals contained in this plan and as shown on the proposals map.

1.8 An 'identified' settlement or built-up area must possess all the following characteristics:

(i) a sizeable amount of development in a compact form (if development is dominated by, or interspersed with, areas of land that are characteristically rural or open, it will not come within this criterion)

(ii) possess a range of basic services, such as a primary school, shop and community facilities, providing a forum for social contact

(iii) be physically and socially cohesive.

1.9 For the purposes of this plan the identified settlements are:

ARBORFIELD CROSS	SHINFIELD
BARKHAM HILL	SINDLESHAM
CHARVIL	SPENCERS WOOD
EARLEY/SONNING/WOODLEY	SWALLOWFIELD
FINCHAMPSTEAD	THREE MILE CROSS
FINCHAMPSTEAD NORTH	TWYFORD
HURST	WARGRAVE
PINEWOOD	WINNERSH
RISELEY	WOKINGHAM.

1.10 Areas of sporadic development exist within the plan area which involve very few properties and/or are dominated by areas of undeveloped rural land either between, or to the rear and in front of properties causing them to be characterised by a loose settlement pattern, or to form a narrow strip of development in what is a distinctly rural area. These areas of development have not been included within the identified settlements.

POLICY WOS2: GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

SUBJECT TO THE DETAILED PROVISIONS OF OTHER POLICIES CONTAINED IN THIS PLAN, DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ALLOWED WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AND LISTED IN THE TEXT.

OUTSIDE THESE SETTLEMENTS DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND WILL BE STRICTLY CONTROLLED THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF THE DETAILED POLICIES AND PROVISIONS OF THIS PLAN AND STRUCTURE PLAN POLICIES C2 (DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE BUILT UP AREAS AND SETTLEMENTS) AND C4 (CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT).

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Planning applications determined.

1.11 The most attractive and successful urban environments are those where all the component parts (e.g. buildings, trees, roads, spaces, people, traffic) have been satisfactorily accommodated to create interesting, lively and pleasant places. In order to maintain and enhance the character of the built environment, the appropriateness of the use of existing buildings and the design of new buildings or extensions to existing buildings, are very important.

1.12 The Council is particularly concerned to promote a high standard of design in new buildings, to ensure that new buildings are responsive to their location and to their potential occupants' and/or users' needs. New development needs to be appropriate in terms of function, siting, scale, form, massing, materials, colour and texture in its relationship with adjoining buildings and sites. Accordingly, new development will be expected to make an acceptable and positive contribution to the built environment. In addition new development should be appropriately located so as to reduce the need to travel and to encourage alternative modes of transport to the car.

POLICY WOS3: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PRINCIPLES

THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT ARE ACCEPTABLE IN PRINCIPLE WHEN ASSESSED AGAINST OTHER POLICIES OF THIS PLAN TO:

a) BE APPROPRIATE IN SCALE OF ACTIVITY AND CHARACTER TO THE AREA IN WHICH THEY ARE LOCATED AND BE INTEGRATED INTO THEIR LOCAL CONTEXT WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO THE AMENITIES OF ADJOINING LAND USES AND OCCUPIERS

b) RETAIN IMPORTANT MAN-MADE, LANDSCAPE AND NATURE CONSERVATION FEATURES AND PROVIDE FOR FURTHER LANDSCAPE TREATMENT WHERE RELEVANT TO THE TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT AND/OR THE PROTECTION OF LOCAL VISUAL AMENITY

c) BE BOTH LOCATED AND DESIGNED SO AS TO REDUCE THE NEED TO TRAVEL AND ENCOURAGE THE USE OF WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT AS ALTERNATIVES TO THE CAR

d) HAVE NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON ROAD SAFETY OR CAUSE HIGHWAY, TRAFFIC GENERATION OR TRAFFIC RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

e) PROVIDE BUILDINGS, FACILITIES AND SPACES THAT ARE CAPABLE OF USE BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE MOBILITY OR SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

f) BE OF HIGH QUALITY OF DESIGN THAT RESPECTS THE LOCAL CONTEXT BY VIRTUE OF SITING, LAYOUT, MASSING, MATERIALS, COLOUR AND TEXTURE.

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Planning applications determined.

Services, Amenities and Infrastructure

1.13 It is a principle of good planning that new development should provide the necessary infrastructure, including services and amenities, needed to support the development. This is a material consideration in considering planning applications (as set out in Circular 1/97, *Planning Obligations*). An explicit assessment must be made of infrastructure requirements arising from the development and how these should be met. Such provision is a key element in the quality of life or new and existing residents. Supplementary planning guidance has been produced setting out the implementation of Policy WOS4 below.

POLICY WOS4: SERVICE, AMENITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS ACCEPTABLE IN PRINCIPLE, UNDER THE POLICIES OF THIS PLAN, DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE EXPECTED TO HAVE

Cont.

Wildlife Heritage Sites and Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites

2.109 These are sites of local importance for nature conservation, which have been identified against agreed criteria in conjunction with the County Council, English Nature and BBONT. Although these sites do not have the same status or protection as SSSI's or LNR's, the Council will take account of the nature conservation interest in determining any development proposals that may affect them and will also seek their appropriate management through advice and assistance to landowners.

2.110 WHS have been identified in the adopted local plans. There have been a number of detailed changes arising from further surveys and reviews of existing sites. WHS in the Green Belt are shown for the first time. The sites will be regularly monitored and their status reviewed to ensure that the nature conservation interest is sustained.

2.111 The Council working in conjunction with the Environment Agency, Berkshire County Council and English Nature have designated WHS on rivers. These river sites are judged against the same strict qualification criteria as other WHS. River ecology has an important influence on the history and character of this District.

2.112 Where a WHS follows the course of a river (or other watercourse) the site boundary will be up to and including the top of the bank. This is usually easily recognised on site. It will also include the water and the river bed substrate. This will take account of the dynamic nature of rivers and will protect flora and fauna in and on the river margins such as reeds, rushes and some nesting sites for birds such as kingfishers and sandmartins. This allows for the natural processes of bank erosion, silting and other changes in a watercourse over time.

2.113 The proposals map should be used as an indicator that there is an adjacent wildlife interest to be taken account of. Agreement of a site specific boundary may require agreement on site and further advice being sought from the Environment Agency Conservation Officer and the Council's Ecologist/Landscape Officer. The issue of flooding is separate to this designation, but there may be instances where both issues will apply.

2.114 Islands within the river can be important in terms of the flow regime and habitats to wildlife. They form part of the dynamic processes of rivers. Islands of approximately an acre or more have been excluded from the designation on the basis that they are likely to support their own distinct land based ecology, and are not an integral part of the river environment. In those cases where an island has been excluded, the normal bank criteria will apply.

2.115 It should be borne in mind that (as is the case on other Wildlife Sites), a proposal can adversely affect these sites even though it is located some distance away. The Environment Agency will be consulted on these watercourse sites, in particular. Other bodies responsible for wildlife advice such as English Nature will be consulted also.

2.116 Other sites that meet the strict criteria may be identified as a result of new information arising during the plan period and will be given the same consideration in the event of any proposals coming forward that might affect them. It is advisable to check with this Council whether any new sites have been designated subsequent to the publication of this District Plan. Other rivers under consideration at present include the:

- River Blackwater, Finchampstead and Swallowfield Parishes
- St. Patrick's Stream and Borough Marsh Stream, Charvil and Wargrave Parishes

POLICY WNC4: PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE HERITAGE SITES AND REGIONALLY IMPORTANT GEOLOGICAL AND GEOMORPHOLOGICAL SITES (EXISTING OR PROPOSED)

THE COUNCIL WILL TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST OF THE WILDLIFE HERITAGE SITES AND THE REGIONALLY IMPORTANT GEOLOGICAL AND GEOMORPHOLOGICAL SITES. EXISTING DESIGNATED SITES ARE SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.

IN DETERMINING PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITES, THE COUNCIL WILL, WHERE APPROPRIATE, REQUIRE THAT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT.

THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE THE MANAGEMENT OF REGIONALLY IMPORTANT GEOLOGICAL AND GEOMORPHOLOGICAL SITES AND WILDLIFE HERITAGE SITES TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THEIR CONSERVATION VALUE.

WHERE A SITE IS SHOWN TO HAVE A NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE (OUTLINED ABOVE) THEN ANY PROPOSAL THAT LEADS (DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY) TO DETERIORATION, SUFFICIENT TO REMOVE OR ADVERSELY AFFECT ITS VALUE, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

Implementation: The development control process and advice and assistance to landowners.

Monitoring: Planning applications determined with WHS/RIGS and management advice and assistance provided.

2.117 RIGS are recognised for their local importance. They represent the regional variation in geological and geomorphological features and processes. The protection afforded these sites will be similar to that of WHS. As of Autumn 1996 there have been no sites recognised in this District. Whilst the accurate assessment and selection of RIGS are currently at a preliminary stage of consideration, English Nature has confirmed that it is likely that proposed sites will emerge during the period of this District Local Plan. To avoid any doubt, it is advisable to discuss whether any sites have been confirmed with the Planning Department.

Nature Conservation in the Wider Countryside

2.118 Much of the scope for nature conservation lies in the farmed countryside, outside protected areas. Most farming and forestry operations fall outside planning control, so the maintenance of wildlife and their habitats ultimately depends upon fostering the goodwill and voluntary participation of the landowner. To encourage 'good' management the Council will offer initial advice to enable the landowner to develop their proposals, seeking further advice and grant aid from the existing environmental programmes run by English Nature, the Countryside Commission, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Authority. The Council will also encourage other bodies such as BBONT and the Farming and Wildlife Group (FWAG) to participate wherever possible. The impact of any development upon existing wildlife habitats will be assessed, and where necessary, the proposals may be modified to mitigate any adverse effects. Where opportunities arise to create new habitats, this will be encouraged.

POLICY WBE19: DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS

DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS WILL BE PREPARED IN THE FOLLOWING CASES:

a) FOR SITES WHERE THIS PLAN IDENTIFIES THAT A DEVELOPMENT BRIEF SHOULD BE PREPARED

b) FOR SITES LARGER THAN 1.0 HA WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED IN THIS PLAN

c) SITES WHERE THERE ARE CONFLICTING POLICY OBJECTIVES, OR WHERE THE SCHEME DEPARTS FROM ADOPTED STANDARDS.

ALL DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS SHOULD BE PREPARED USING THE PROCEDURE SET OUT IN THE DEVELOPMENT BRIEFING MANUAL. THE BRIEF SHOULD INDICATE ALSO HOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE POSITIVELY INTERPRETS THE POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

Implementation: Through the development briefing process.

Monitoring: Quality assessments of development briefs.

AREA-BASED POLICIES

Shinfield Road North of the M4

4.31 Land to the north of the M4 motorway and either side of the A327 Shinfield Road has a particular character arising from its wooded, hilltop nature. The area is high and is prominent in views from many points within the Loddon Valley. Although Shire Hall and the upper slopes of the Lower Earley development are significant features in many of these views, the extensively wooded nature of the hilltop and the low level of development combine to create an attractive woodland boundary to the southerly development of Reading. For these reasons, the Council wishes to see the character of the area maintained, and where possible, enhanced; any proposals for development in this area should be designed to take this aim into account.

4.32 The low level of development results from the land uses in the area which include the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting, Crosfields School and the unused former Reading University Horticultural Research Station, as well as Shire Hall. It is important that any redevelopment of these sites, or any new development in the area, is so designed in terms of amount, appearance and landscaping to respect the need to maintain and enhance the wooded, low density development of this prominent area.

POLICY WBE20: LOW DENSITY DEVELOPMENT OFF SHINFIELD ROAD NORTH OF THE M4

WITHIN THE LAND OFF SHINFIELD ROAD IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE IN TERMS OF THE OTHER POLICIES OF THIS PLAN SHOULD BE OF A SCALE AND CHARACTER WHICH REFLECTS AND ENHANCES THE VISUAL APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER OF THIS PROMINENT HILLTOP SITE.

Cont.

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Check quality of development on the ground.

Arborfield Garrison

4.33 Arborfield Garrison lies to the east of Eversley Road, south of Arborfield and is physically separate from it. The land is slightly lower than much of the surrounding area, thus facilitating views into the development, although these are broken by groups of trees, particularly on the western side.

4.34 The Garrison is characterised by inter- and post-war development, interspersed by areas of open space. A small amount of local authority and private housing is also located on the western side of the developed area, together with a former brick and tile yard.

4.35 The area generates a considerable amount of employment and contains a substantial amount of residential accommodation. The Garrison also contains retail, recreational and community facilities, thus providing its cohesion. It is therefore fairly self-contained, and possesses the essential qualities of a identified settlement.

4.36 Under the provisions of Circular 18/84, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) does not require planning permission for development for its own purposes, although it is under an obligation to consult local planning authorities before proceeding with development. However, if it wishes to dispose of land for development, planning permission is required.

4.37 Like all Government Departments, the MoD is required to assess its holdings and dispose of land that is surplus to its requirements. Part of the area has been identified as a reserve housing site (Policy WH2). In the event of demand for other development occurring at Arborfield Garrison, it is considered important that criteria are drawn up against which the acceptability of the development can be assessed. Accordingly, a boundary to development, taking account of the location of existing development together with natural and physical features has been drawn as shown on the proposals map. This does not include the whole of the garrison area but does cover the major built up parts of it that have the characteristics of a settlement. Outside the defined area development, other than for defence purposes, would be inappropriate in scale and relationship to the countryside.

4.38 There is a lack of publicly available facilities in the area. In connection with any significant development, opportunities will therefore be sought to improve accessibility to facilities for new and existing residents.

POLICY WBE21: DEVELOPMENT AT ARBORFIELD GARRISON

WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY OF ARBORFIELD GARRISON SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, THERE WILL BE A SIMILAR PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF DEVELOPMENT TO THAT APPLYING TO OTHER SETTLEMENTS, SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF OTHER POLICIES CONTAINED IN THIS PLAN.

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Through the annual housing commitments exercise.

landscaping, will be required because of the visual prominence of the site, particularly from the M4, and its edge of settlement location.

7.32 The site is not well related to existing shops and services and it would be beneficial for workers to have on-site access to services. A master plan covering the three local authority areas is being drawn up.

PROPOSAL WEM3: EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT AT READING BUSINESS PARK

IN THE PERIOD OF THIS PLAN THE LAND SOUTH OF READING AND NORTH OF THE M4 MOTORWAY (THAT IS 22 HECTARES WEST OF COURAGE BREWERY AND 3.5 HECTARES WEST OF KYBES LANE) WILL BE DEVELOPED AS A CORE EMPLOYMENT SITE WITH CLASS B1 AND B8 FLOORSPACE NOT EXCEEDING 83,610 SQ.M. IN TOTAL. WITHIN THE AREA SHOWN FOR BUILT DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE MASTER PLAN, THE COUNCIL WILL PARTICULARLY ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF:

- RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL USES
- STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION USES
- A VARIETY OF SIZES OF UNITS
- A CRÈCHE OR DAY NURSERY
- A NON-RESIDENTIAL TRAINING CENTRE
- SMALL SCALE RECREATIONAL AND OTHER FACILITIES TO MEET THE DAY TO DAY NEEDS OF THOSE WHO WORK ON THE SITE

IN ORDER TO INTEGRATE THE SITE INTO ITS SURROUNDINGS, THE COUNCIL WHEN ASSESSING PROPOSALS WILL SEEK THE RETENTION OF EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES WITHIN THE SITE AND WILL REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL NEW STRUCTURAL LANDSCAPING TO A HIGH STANDARD PARTICULARLY ON THE M4 FRONTAGE OF BOTH SITES AND THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE KYBES LANE SITE.

Implementation: Through the development control process in consultation with Reading and Newbury Councils.

Monitoring: Annual employment monitoring. Checking development proposals against the requirements of the master plan and the traffic cap.

Criteria for Business, Industrial, Distribution and Storage Employment Generating Development

7.33 Throughout the plan period major new employment provision will be through the implementation of commitments and the limited development in employment areas defined above in Policies WEM1 and WEM2. But it is recognised that a degree of flexibility needs to be built into the plan to accommodate other potentially acceptable development. As it will not be possible to identify all sites that will come forward for development over the lifetime of the new plan, it is appropriate to set criteria as a guide for potential investors in the local economy, and to indicate which forms of development will not normally be acceptable. The policy which follows applies to land within settlement boundaries and to applications for new development, redevelopment, extension and changes of use that provide BIDS floorspace. Greenfield development outside settlements is contrary to Policy WOS2, unless land is identified as an

employment site under Policy WEM1. For employment policy applied to countryside areas see Policies WRE1 (farm diversification), WRE2 (re-use and adaptation of rural buildings) and WRE4 (infilling and redevelopment at existing sites) and Proposal WRE3 (new uses for research establishments outside the settlement of Shinfield) in the Rural Economy section of this chapter.

POLICY WEM4: CRITERIA FOR EMPLOYMENT GENERATING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SETTLEMENTS ON UNIDENTIFIED SITES

OUTSIDE EXISTING CORE EMPLOYMENT AREAS AND THOSE AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT UNDER POLICY E1, BUSINESS, INDUSTRIAL, DISTRIBUTION AND STORAGE DEVELOPMENT (CLASS B1-B8), WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTABLE WHERE THE PROPOSAL:

a) CONFORMS WITH THE PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN STRUCTURE PLAN POLICY BU1

b) DOES NOT RESULT IN A NET LOSS OF FLOORSPACE CATERING FOR A LOCAL NEED (SEE POLICIES WEM7, WEM8, WEM9, WEM10 AND WEM12)

c) DOES NOT RESULT IN LOSS OF A SITE WITH PERMISSION FOR RETAIL DEVELOPMENT OR IDENTIFIED FOR SUCH USE IN THIS PLAN

d) CONFORMS WITH THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PRINCIPLES IN POLICY WOS3.

FAVOURABLE CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO EXISTING BUSINESSES NOT CAUSING ENVIRONMENTAL NUISANCE THAT WISH TO EXPAND IN SITU.

Implementation: Through the development control process.

Monitoring: Annual employment monitoring.

University of Reading

7.34 The University of Reading is the largest employer in the plan area. The main campus occupies Whiteknights Park which is included in the Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record and contains several listed buildings. The park is 119 hectares in extent and lies mainly in the plan area but also extends into Reading Borough. The site is the subject of a planning brief prepared jointly with the University and Reading Borough Council. The University may have future needs for consolidation on the site because of disposal of its land elsewhere, an increase in student housing stock, or the provision of accommodation for outside research institutions and the development of products linked with the University's research function. Heritage Policy WHE9 applies to the site together with the two Proposals, WEM5 and WEM6, which follow.

PROPOSAL WEM5: WHITEKNIGHTS PARK, UNIVERSITY OF READING

NEW DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF READING CAMPUS, WHITEKNIGHTS PARK SHALL BE RESTRICTED TO THOSE AREAS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP. DEVELOPMENT SHALL:

Cont.

Wokingham **District Local Plan**

Proposed Amendments to

Deposit Draft 1999

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT PLAN

Reason for amendment: Update. Layout is a key factor which could adversely affect the setting, character or special landscape qualities of an area.

(22 March 1999)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 2/24

Page 32 ***paragraph 2.69***

Replace 'of national/regional' ***with*** 'of international, national and regional'

Reason for amendment: To take account of response 2665, respondent 1116.

(22 March 1999)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 2/25

Page 33 ***paragraph 2.74***

Replace 'do not have a regional or' (line 2) ***with*** 'are not of'

Reason for amendment: To take account of response 2451, respondent 1101 (Environment Agency).

(22 March 1999)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 2/26

Page 35 ***Policy WLL9***

Amend policy to read

POLICY WLL9: SITES OF URBAN LANDSCAPE VALUE

within the sites of urban landscape value, as defined on the proposals map, DEVELOPMENT WILL BE STRICTLY CONTROLLED.

LAND USES OR BUILT DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD HAVE A DETRIMENTAL IMPACT UPON ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WILL NOT BE PERMITTED;

A) THE VISUAL PROMINENCE OF THE SITE FROM WITHIN, OR VIEWS FROM OUTSIDE,THE URBAN AREA

B) THE RECREATIONAL OR WILDLIFE IMPORTANCE OF THE SITE AND ADJACENT LAND

C) THE SPECIAL LANDSCAPE QUALITIES THAT MAKE THE SITE VALUABLE TO THE HISTORIC CHARACTER, TOWNSCAPE OR URBAN FORM

D) INDIVIDUAL LANDSCAPE FEATURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE SPECIAL LANDSCAPE QUALITY OF THE SITE (SUCH AS PONDS, WOODLAND, TREES AND HEDGEROWS) WHERE DEVELOPMENT COULD RESULT IN THEIR REMOVAL OR DEGRADATION.

Implementation: The development control process.

Monitoring: Impact of planning applications determined.

Reason for amendment: To take account of response 922, respondent 635 (R. Samuel).

(22 March 1999)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 2/27

Page 36 ***Paragraph 2.82***

Add after 'man-made features have developed' (sixth line) 'significant'

Reason for amendment: To take account of suggestions of the Council's Countryside Management Team.

(22 March 1999)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 2/28

Page 36 ***Paragraph 2.83***

Add after 'the Thames Basin Heaths which' (second line) 'border the District and'

Reason for amendment: To take account of response 299, respondent 147 (BBONT)

(22 March 1999)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 2/29

Page 36 ***Paragraph 2.83***

Amend 'special protection area' (third line) **to read** 'Special Protection Area'.

Reason for amendment: To take account of response 1045, respondent 701 (English Nature)

(22 March 1999)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 4/8

Page 71 *Policy WBE19 Development Briefs*

Insert ", including use of the Development Briefing Manual, section A1 of the Planning Guidelines" ***after*** "process" ***in the implementation paragraph.***

Reason for amendment Update.

(22 March 1999)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 4/9

Page 71 *Policy WBE20 Low Density Development Off Shinfield Road North of The M4*

Delete policy WBE20 and paragraphs 4.31 and 4.32 of the supporting text.

Reason for amendment: To take into account response 1472 by respondent 930 (Foster Wheeler) and to take account of strategy to make the best use of already developed land.

(22 March 1999)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT 4/10

Page 72 *Policy WBE21 Development at Arborfield Garrison*

Delete "OTHER" (line 4), ***replace with*** "THE IDENTIFIED".

Reason for amendment: To take into account response 1637 by respondent 963 (GOSE) and for clarification.

(15 February 1999)

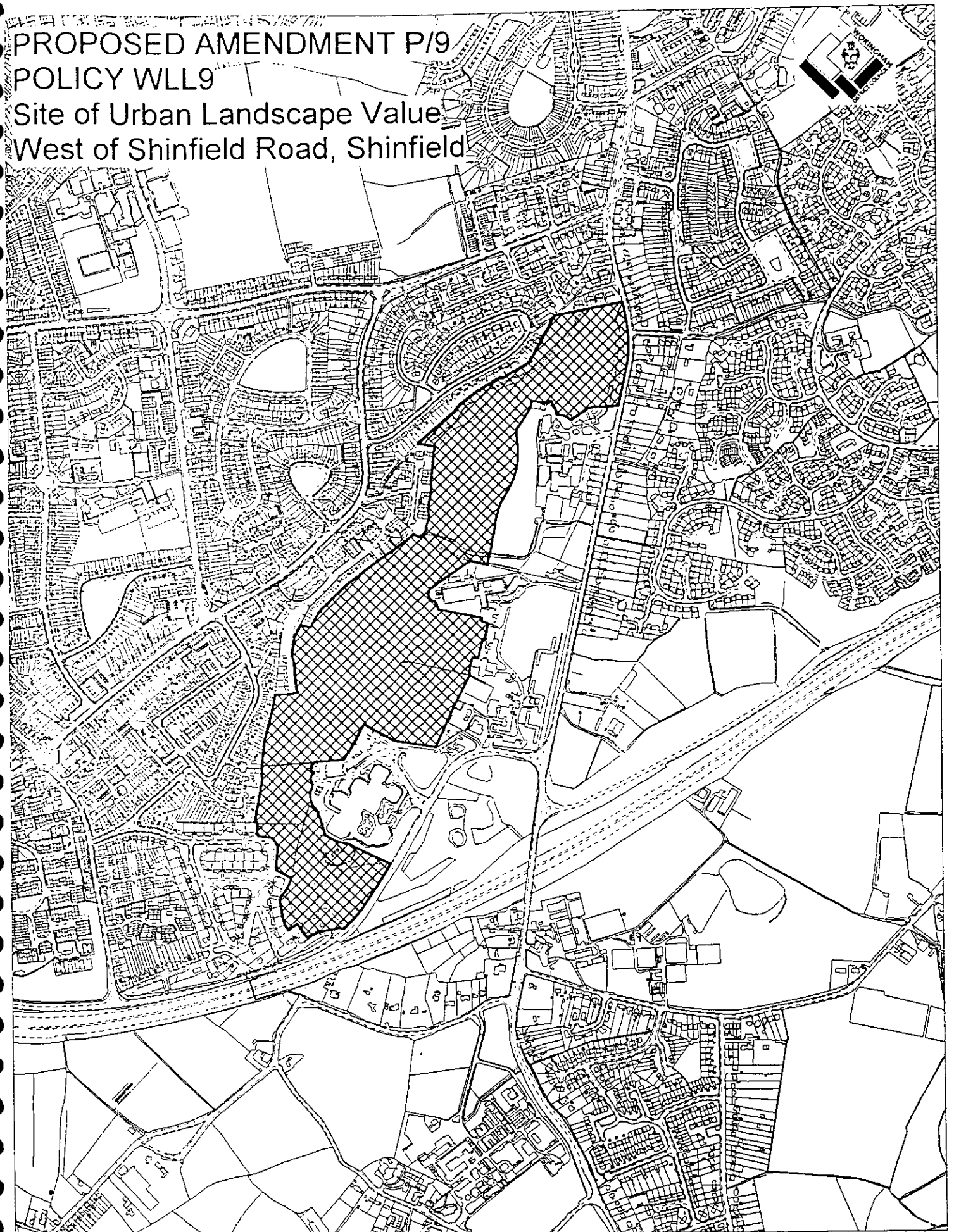
PROPOSED AMENDMENT 4/11

Page 73 *Paragraph 4.39*

Delete 'and Arborfield Cross as conservation areas' (line seven) ***and replace with*** 'as a conservation area'.

Reason for amendment: Update.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT P/9
POLICY WLL9
Site of Urban Landscape Value
West of Shinfield Road, Shinfield



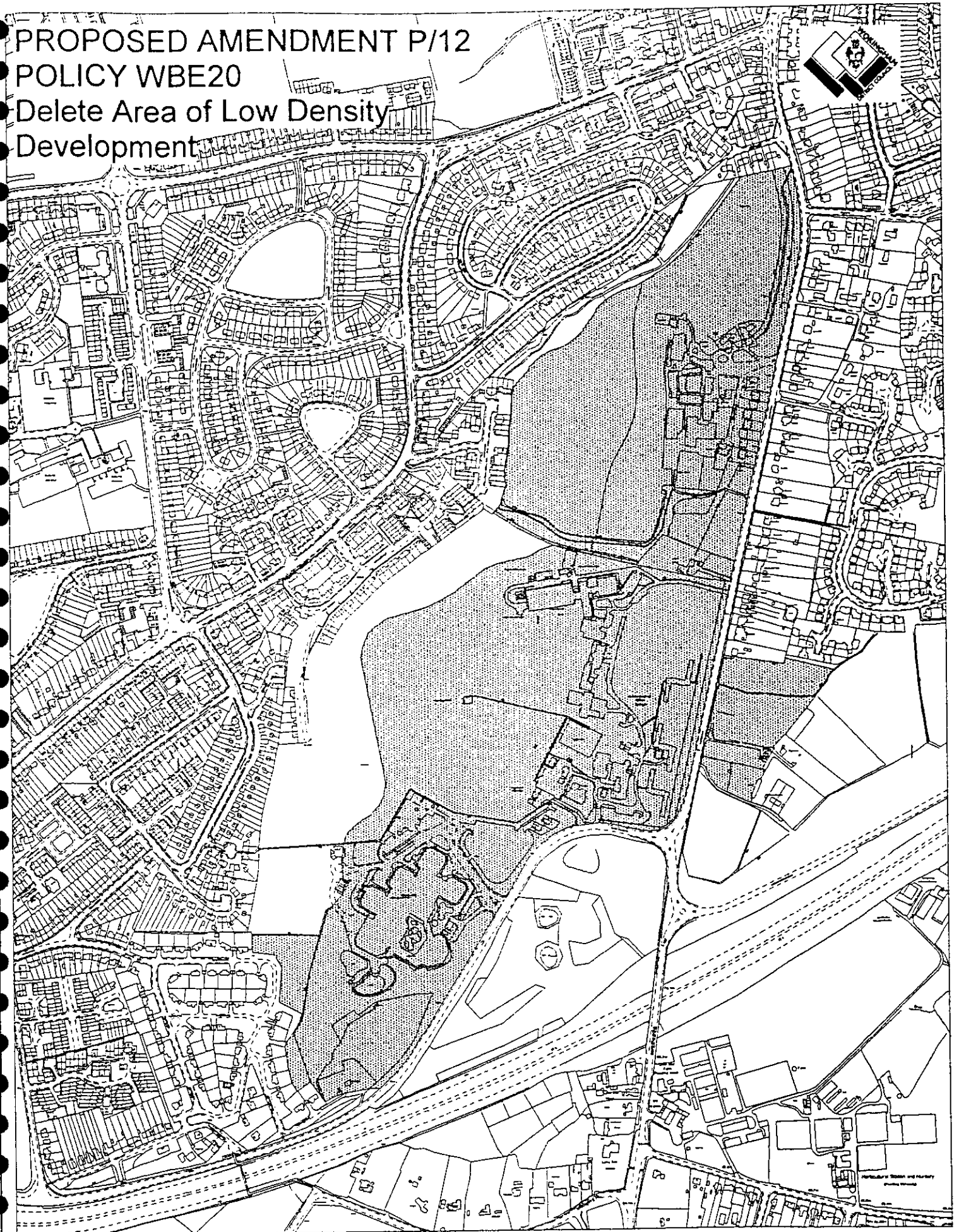
Based upon the 1999 OS 1:1250 and 1:2500 mapping with the permission of the controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence LA086134

Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.
April 1999

Scale: 1 : 10000

N
W E
S

PROPOSED AMENDMENT P/12
POLICY WBE20
Delete Area of Low Density Development



Based upon the 1999 OS 1:1250 and 1:2500 mapping with the permission of the controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence LA086134

Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.
April 1999

Scale: 1 : 15000

N
W E
S



BWP-READING
RECEIVED
- 8 SEP 1999
Sent to:
File: Library
Action: Return to AD - copy report to GMSB + Secretariat
By: Date:

MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

7.30pm

MONDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER, 1999

AGENDA

Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire

Jeff Salzman
ActingChief Executive

Reason for not proceeding with the amendment: Following representations an alternative wording, including a reference to detrimental uses, as given in additional proposed amendments is considered more appropriate.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT P/2

Proposals Map ***Policy WOS2***

Include within settlement;

Applied Research Station, Shinfield Road, Shinfield

Reason for not proceeding with the amendment: That following representations it is considered that the extent of the development area of the existing planning permission should be the basis of the settlement boundary. This is included as a proposed additional amendment.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT P/9

Proposals Map ***Policy WLL9***

Add: Land west of Shinfield Road, Shinfield

Reason for not proceeding with the amendment: The land in question does not meet the criteria for the designation of land as a site of urban landscape value. Fails as a Site of Urban Landscape Value with key weaknesses of:

1) Landscape value being visual (only as wooded area and where other legal/forestry controls exist).
2) No public access for recreation or leisure.
3) Other policy controls exist.

Limited landscape resource to local community except in visual sense.

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL PROPOSED AMENDMENT

ADDITIONAL PROPOSED AMENDMENT A1

Page 20 ***Paragraph 2.25***

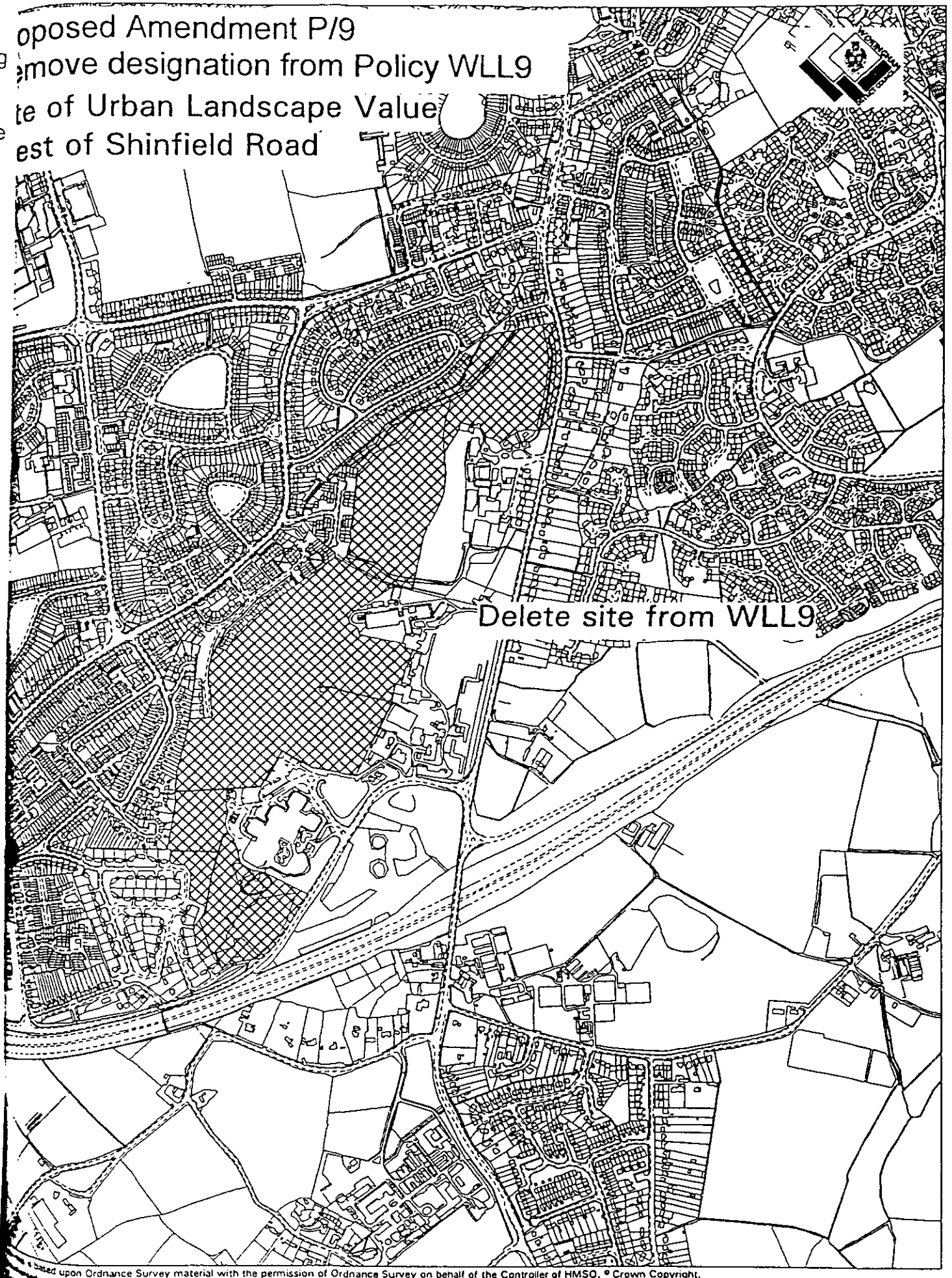
Add sentence after 'distinct identified settlements' (line 3):
'Existing permitted uses will continue in these areas but intensification of these uses will not be allowed where the existing open and undeveloped character of the land is adversely affected'

Reason for amendment: To take account of response 6241, respondent 1041 (University Of Reading), response 6012, respondent 1167 and response 6046 respondent 947 (Walker) having regard to decision letter on appeal on site in gap.

---

setting

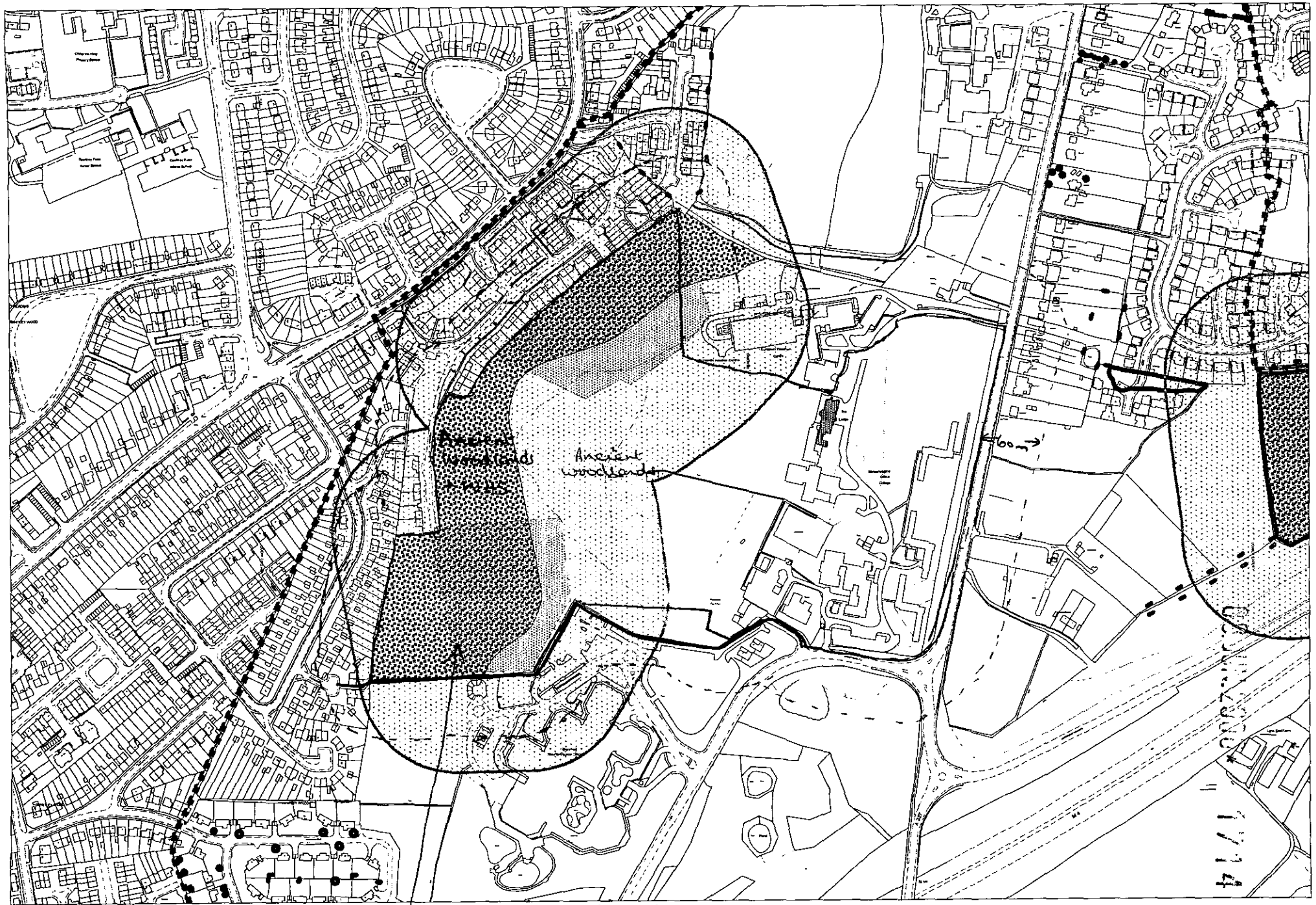
ven the



based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

vironmental Services, Wokingham District Council.
ptember 1999

Scale: 1 : 10000



This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
*Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.*Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

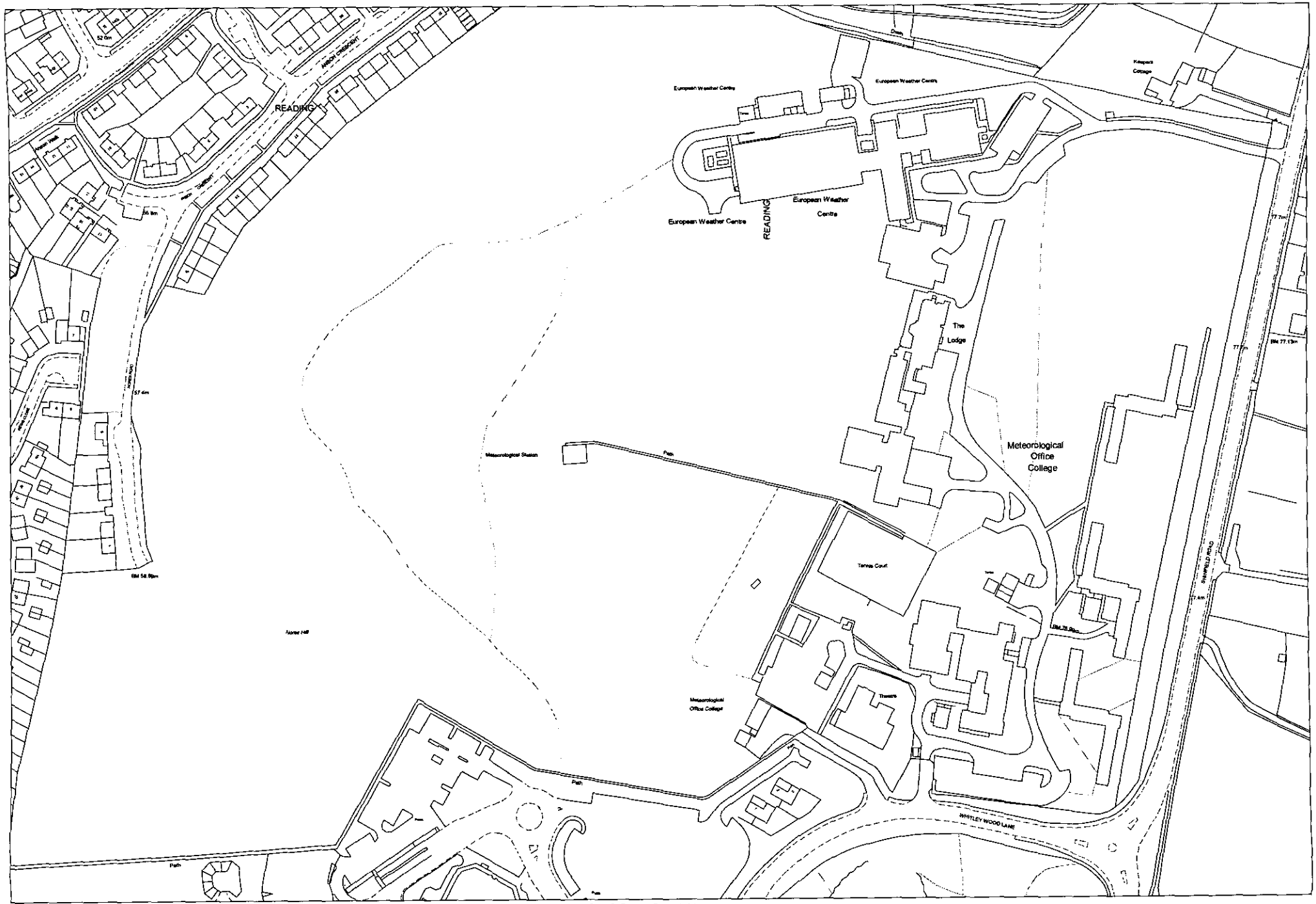
Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

14 June 2000

Ancient woodlands + wild life Heritage Site

Scale: 1 : 5000

N W E S


READING
European Weather Centre
European Weather Centre
European Weather Centre
READING
The Lodge
Meteorological Office College
Tennis Court
Meteorological Station
Path
Path
Path
WHITLEY WOOD LANE
SHINFIELD ROAD
Keepers Cottage
Meteorological Office College
Theatre
Norse Hill
Drain
Drain
Drain



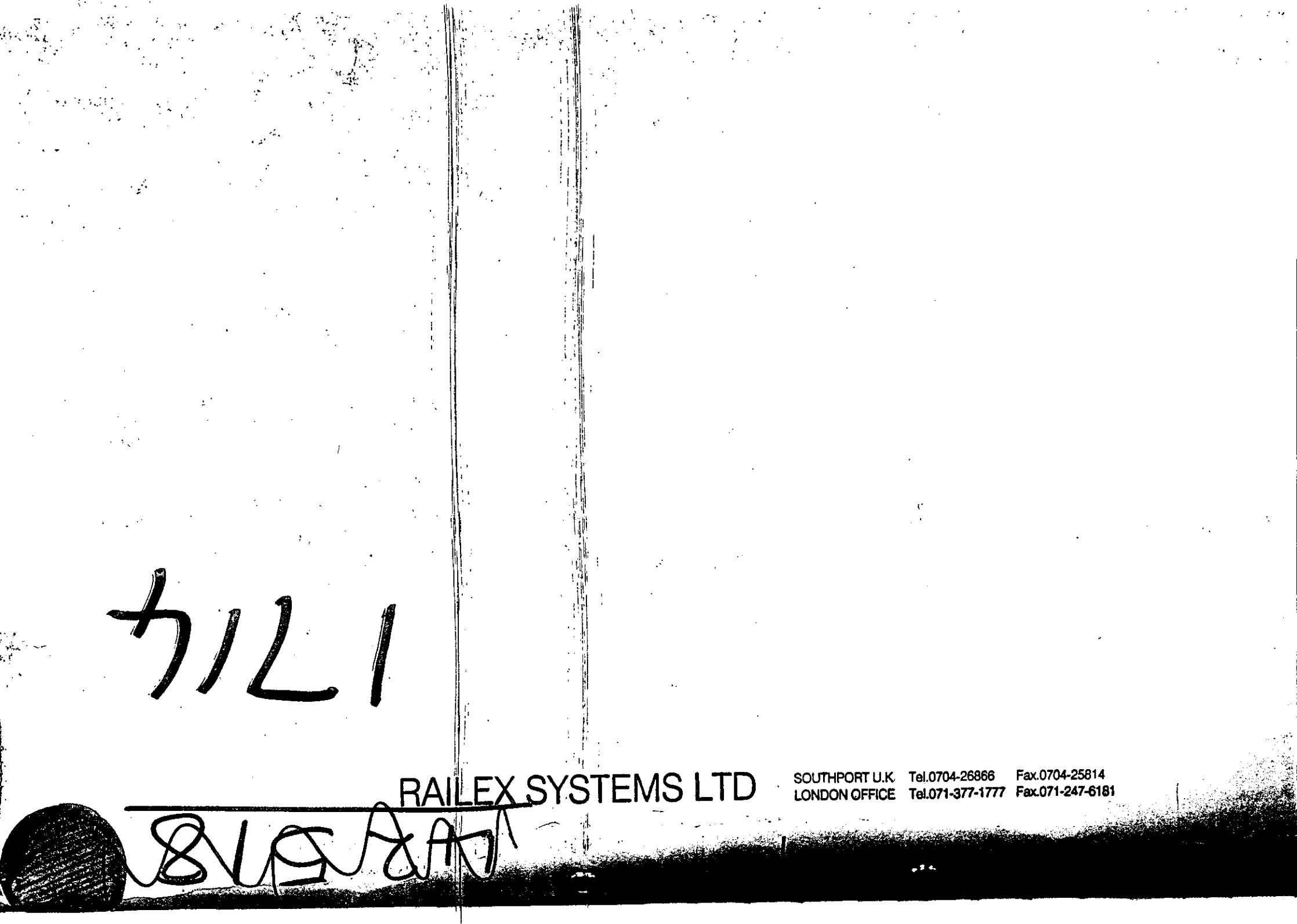
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

9 August 2000

Scale: 1 : 5000

N
W E
S



RAILEX SYSTEMS LTD

SOUTHPORT U.K. Tel.0704-26866 Fax.0704-25814
LONDON OFFICE Tel.071-377-1777 Fax.071-247-6161

WARD: Shinfield

6.00 APPLICATION O/2000/1714 PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

Purpose of Report

6.01 To advise members of receipt of the above application.

Suggested Action

6.02 To ask members to note receipt of the above application and to advise officers of any concerns or requests for further information.

Background Information

6.03 The Meteorological Office is consulting WDC regarding its proposed development under arrangements used by government departments under Circular 18/84. (The Meteorological Office are part of the Ministry of Defence.)

The agents have explained that the Met. Office is a world leader in meteorology and climatology and is the forefront of scientific and technological development. Its existing headquarters buildings in Bracknell are outdated and too costly to be worth modernising, and are inconveniently located in several buildings. The proposal for new building at their Shinfield Park site has been made because they already own it. (It currently accommodates their training operation.) This site is also attractive to them as it would strengthen existing links with the European Centre for Medium Weather Forecasting (on adjacent land) and with Reading University.
The Met. Office is also consulting with Bracknell Forest BC under Circular 18/84 with regard to the construction of a similar, alternative headquarters building at their Beaufort Park site. (Beaufort Park is sited north of Nine Mile Ride and east of Old Wokingham Road in Bracknell Forest BC.) Following both consultations, The Met. Office will consider their position with regard to relocation. At present relocation away from the Reading-Bracknell area has not been considered in detail, nor have other non Met. Office owned sites in the locality. The future use of the Met. Office's London Road, Bracknell site will be the subject of a planning brief to be prepared in conjunction with Bracknell Forest BC. It is envisaged that a mixed use redevelopment could take place on the site, including opportunities for new housing.

The Proposal

6.04 The proposal is in outline for a 33,351 m² headquarters office/computer/ ancillary teaching building, car parking, a social building (including creche) and an accommodation block for students. The indictive plans show a 3 storey office block and a decked car park with 750 spaces . About 1,500 staff are expected (nearly all transferred from Bracknell). All existing buildings on the site would be demolished except the Grade II Listed Lodge. The main access would be directly onto the existing roundabout on Shinfield Road. A

Green Transport Plan is proposed, including a possible shuttle bus service to Winnersh Triangle Station to collect staff, many of whom currently live in Bracknell and Wokingham. A contribution is also proposed to highway improvements in the local area, which may include re-modelling the roundabout and the WDC scheme for proposed road improvements to the B3270.

Planning Issues.

6.05 The site is within a settlement boundary and an initial assessment has not identified any obvious physical or visual site objections. The main issues are therefore considered to be the strategic ones of potential pressures on housing and transport. Regarding housing, this is essentially considered to be an issue for central Berkshire as a whole in this case. The agents have pointed out that the proposal is essentially a relocation of existing staff from offices nearby in Bracknell, and that a new settlement for up to 2,500 houses is proposed to be nearby. The extent to which additional housing pressure is a concern will depend partly if not mainly on what happens to the existing vacated sites in Bracknell; in particular the amount of new housing (if any) which could offset this potential pressure, and the amount of office/ employment floorspace which would add to pressure in any mixed use redevelopment. The highway officer will assess the effect of the proposal on highways and transport.

The alternative site at Beaufort Park in Bracknell Forest BC is outside a settlement boundary and in a gap between settlements.

Consultations

6.06 WDC expect to be consulted on the proposal at Beaufort Park, and we have sent consultations to Bracknell Forrest BC, Reading BC and the Joint Strategic Planning Unit (amongst others).

Equal Opportunities Implications

6.07 None

Financial Implications

6.08 Contributions towards highway improvements locally are proposed. Other contributions towards services and infrastructure may be requested.

Consultations with Parish and Town Councils/Voluntary Sector Organisations

6.09 Shinfield Parish Council and Earley Town Council have been consulted and any comments received will be reported.

Environmental Implications

6.10 Will be assessed when the application is reported to the Committee for observations to be sent to the Met. Office.

Time Constraints

6.11 As the new accommodation is required by the Met. Office by the end of 2002, observations from WDC are required as soon as possible.

Background Papers	**Department Where Held**
Planning Application O/2000/1714	Environmental Services

Angela Odell

16.06.00

Environmental Implications

6.10 Will be assessed when the application is reported to the Committee for observations to be sent to the Met. Office.

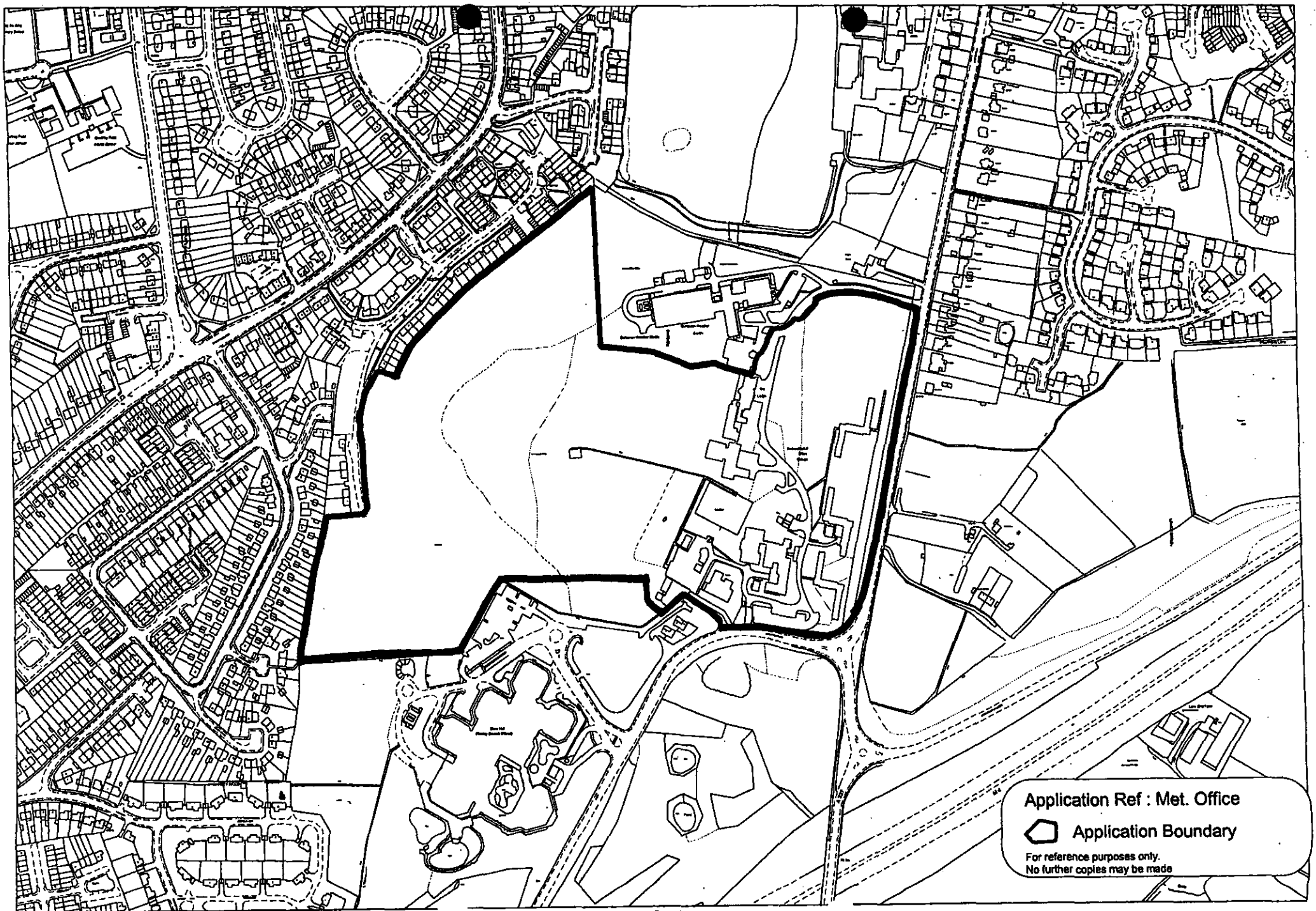
Time Constraints

6.11 As the new accommodation is required by the Met. Office by the end of 2002, observations from WDC are required as soon as possible.

Background Papers	Department Where Held
Planning Application O/2000/1714	Environmental Services

Angela Odell

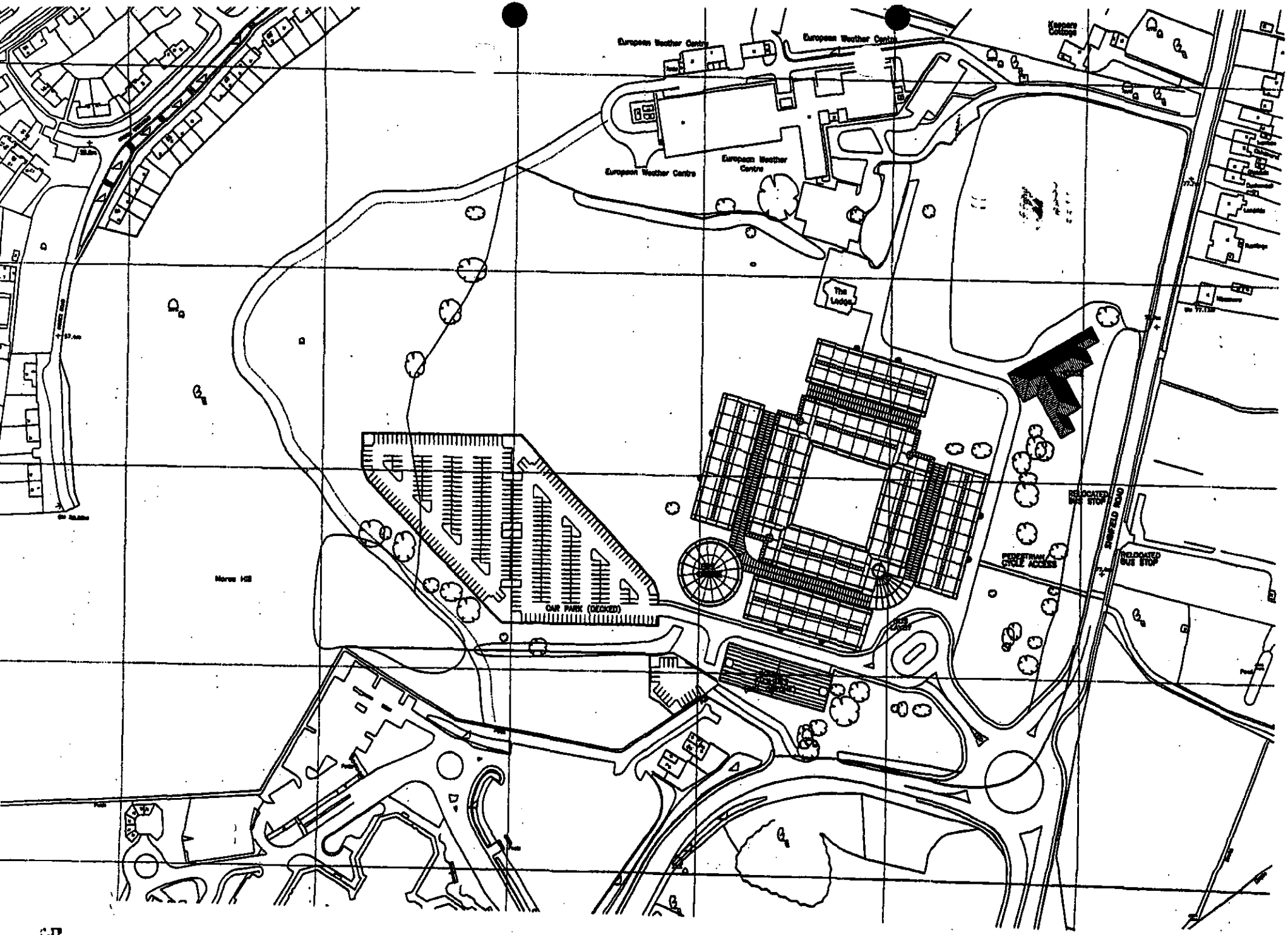
16.06.00



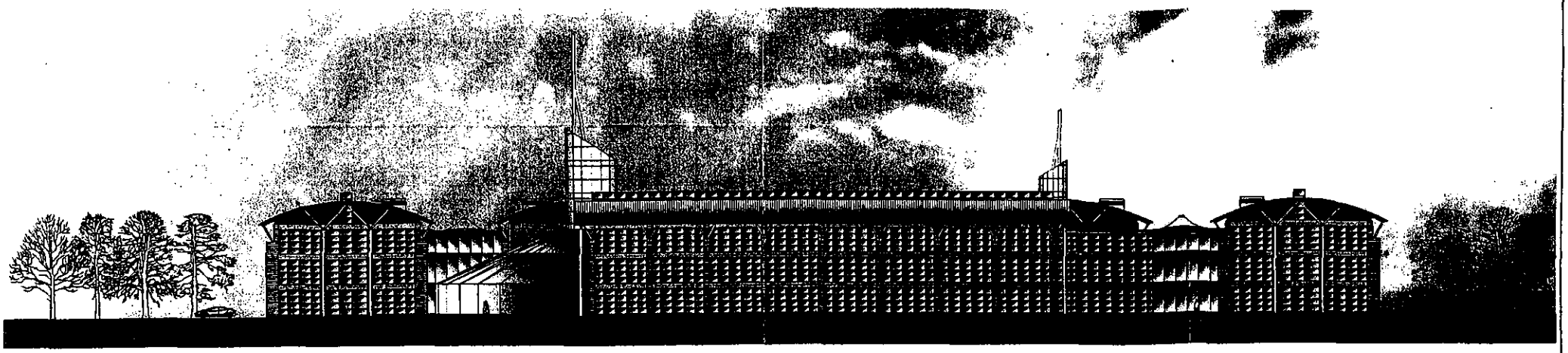
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Surv[illegible]alf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil pr[illegible]edings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

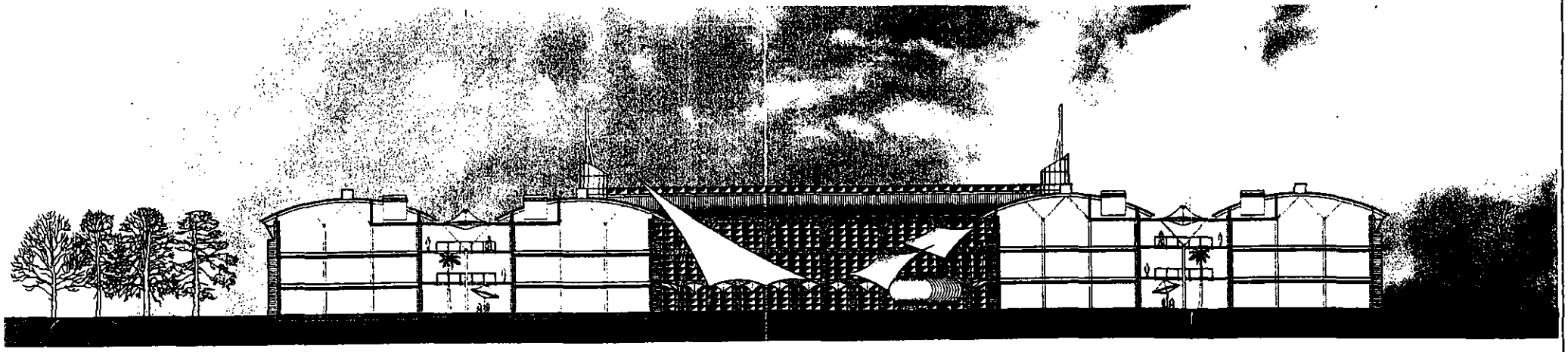
Scale: 1 : 5000



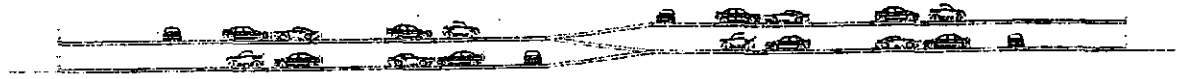
Indicative Plan



Typical elevation main building (east)



Typical section main building (west - east)



Typical section car park (west - east)

Project
Met. Office relocation
Shinfield Park, Reading

Drawing Title
Typical Section & Elevation
Option S4B

Date	Scale	Drawn by
08-05-00	1:250 (A1) 1:500 (A3)	NPB
Project No	Drawing No	Revision
9906	SK008	-

Barton Willmore
Architecture

Architects Environmental Consultants Town Planners Project Services

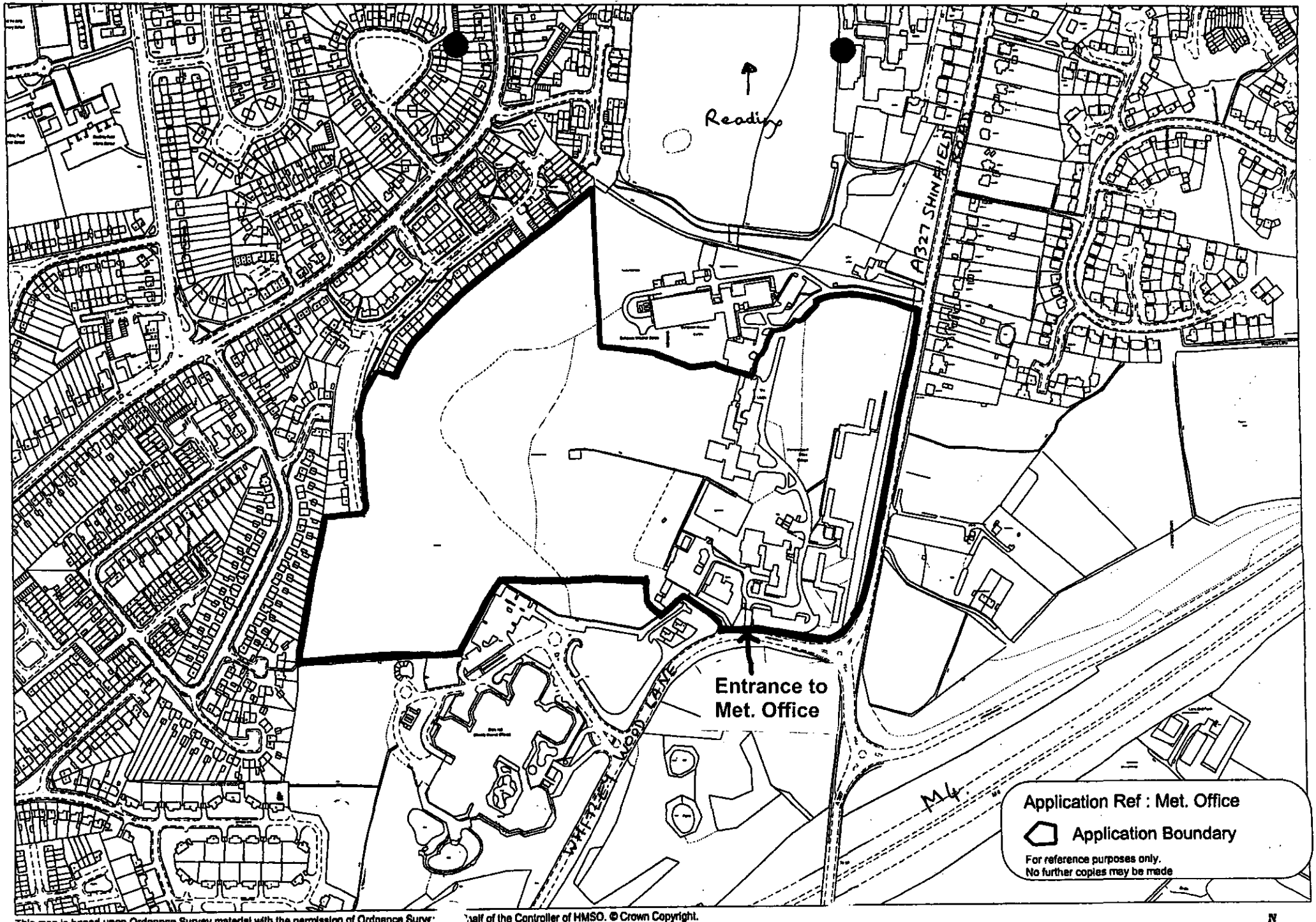
The Barton Willmore Partnership Reading Limited
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close
Calcot, Reading, RG31 7BW
Tel: 0118 943 0000 Fax: 0118 943 0001
e-mail: enquiries@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 JUNE 2000 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.15 PM

Present: Mr M J Bryant, Mr S R Conway, Mrs A N M C Drake, Mr T P Dredge, Mr J L Earnshaw, Mrs J A Lissaman, Mrs M A Long, Mr K A Malvern, Mrs M Robertson, Fiona Rolls and ~~Mr A J Ross~~ Mr Bealty

Chief Executive's Department
P.O. Box 150
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WQ
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 979 0877
Minicom No: (0118) 977 8909
DX: 33506 - Wokingham

To: The Members of the Development Control Committee



This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Surv[illegible]alf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil pr[illegible]edings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

28 June 2000

Scale: 1 : 500[illegible]

MET. OFFICE – COMMITTEE 28.6.00

Purpose of report now is to bring the application to members attention at an early stage, to take any questions and for any comments or concerns to be voiced.

Some members, officers and reps. From Shinfield p.c. visited the Met. Offices in Bracknell on Monday evening. The Met. Office offered to arrange a site visit for members to the proposed site in Shinfield, and if members wish to visit the site suggest arrange day/time at end of meeting.

Main issues in report are potential traffic generation and journey-to-work, potential of proposal to add to housing pressures (what happens to the vacated Backnell sites), any on site physical or visual issues and situation of the Shinfield Players. Members should also be aware that Bracknell Forest D.C. have received a consultation on a similar proposal as an alternative at Beaufort Park.

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Timescale Circ. 18/84 requires us to submit our obs. within 8 weeks, i.e. by 4 August, but I have just written asking for an extension of time incase it is needed. JSPU been consulted. Their next committee not until 8 Sept., but I have been advised by phone today that because of the length of time until their next Committee they will deal with it under delegated powers (this includes consultation with their chairman and vice-chairman).

Consultations (to date)
Listed Buildings & Conservation Officer

1. Requests more information regarding the removal of the recent additions.
2. Considers the proposed main building is too close, given its size and scale.

My reply – I have spoken with the planning consultants today. They are to arrange a meeting with Harold to discuss these points. N.B. Proposal is in outline with no siting fixed – design/siting is indicative only due to 'bid process' Met. Office have to go through. I can explain more about this tonight if you wish.

Shinfield Players

Currently in an ex.NAFFI terrapin building on a 6 months lease.
Met. Office have advised that re. Shinfield Players, that they had been consulted about 2 months ago and the Met. Office had offered them space in the proposed social building. However, they had said that they wanted their own building so that they could put on performances every night in a run and

have time in the day to set out the stage. He explained that the Players were now reconsidering and he was waiting to hear what they wanted to do. Agent explained that the existing Players' building was in the way as it was the best site for the social building (so that it could be accessed easily by the public and out of the secure area) but that the building was a terrapin and could be moved.
Ultimately the Players have no right to stay on the site and if the Met. Office do not relocate here, then site expected to be disposed of and it would be up to the new owner/operator as to their future. However, Met. Office said they recognised they have a social responsibility to the Players and hope that the matter can be resolved. This could mean offering them assistance to relocate off-site.

Circ. 18/84

Having been consulted, the LPA should notify the Met. Office of its views within 8 weeks – i.e. if it objects and why, or if it does not object together with any conditions. LPA should also forward any objections it has received from other parties it has consuulted. (para. 19)

Departures – SoS (for Environment) can decide to hold a PI and decide himself (para. 20).

If we receive objections and decide not to object ourselves, then these objections must be brought to the attention of the met. Office for the SoS's attention. If the SoS considers the objections are weighty enough he can arrange for a non-statutory PLI (Public Locla Inquiry) (para. 23).

Where there are objections from the LPA or other weighty enough objections, then opportunity given to LPA etc. and the Met. Office to put their case, normally by WR, but can be IH or PLI.

'Bid Process'
As the Met. Office is a government is a government property and the proposal is above a threshold level, they have to advertise it in the European Journal for private partners to possible design/build/manage the project on the site, an alternative site or if they already have alternative suitable premises (They have just done this.) Until a partner identified, then the proposal is only illustrative and could change depending on the partner. Hence can only go so far at this stage with any on site details – e.g. in relation to the Listed Building.

Site Details
Site area – 17.6 ha.
Western woodlands is a WHS

Proposal	sq.m.	
Grade II Lodge	428	
Residential block	2,266	
Headquarters blg.	33,351	of which 29,283 sq.m. is office, including 4,645 for ops. room

Social blg.	1,115	(few staff)
Total	37,160	

Transport

Propose alteration to northern Black Boy roundabout, + contribution to local off-site highway works (£1m.+ - this information given to me verbally).
Investigating shuttle bus to Winnersh Triangle. Join with Foster Wheeler.

15,806 m² / 170000 sq ft + office car parks

1. How much floorspace is there in the existing London Road office building?
2. Is this the only building that the Met. Office own in Bracknell Town, or do they own other buildings? If so what is proposed for these – any chance of housing on any of these sites also?
3. How much money is proposed towards local highway improvements (WSP Report para. 12.16)?
4. I visited the site this morning with Graham Cooper, and he explained that assuming that we do not object in principle to the Shinfield Park proposal, it is not a foregone conclusion that they can move to it as there is some complicated bidding process they have to go through first. Please could this be explained in writing as I didn't quite grasp it (no immediate hurry for this).

Thanks

Angela

Steve Noyes

MET.OFFICE – NOTES ON PRESENTATION MEETING GIVEN BY THE MET.OFFICE ON 26.6.00 AT BRACKNELL

Attended by:
District Councillors: Bryant, Dredge, Mrs Robertson, Mrs Long.
Parish Councillors: Heggerman, Mrs Barnes, ?
WDC Offficers: Jane Earl, Karen Satterford, John Mitchell, Angela Odell.
Met. Office staff including their chief exec. and Graham Cooper.
Ian Tant of Barton Willmore.

Met. Office explained why they needed to move (consolidate to one site, offices in need of extensive works and not worth it, site too cramped, etc.) Their timescale is to fit in with arrival of new supercomputer (this happens every 3-4 years) and the next 'window' would be in 2006/7 which would be too late in terms of the state of the existing building, etc. Therefore want to do it now.

Main issues raised by Cllr Bryant were traffic and what would happen to the Shinfield Players.

Met. Office/Ian explained the traffic/GTP proposals (These are in the traffic statement by WSP).
Re. Shinfield Players, Graham explained that they had been consulted about 2 months ago and the Met. Office had offered them space in the proposed social building. However, they had said that they wanted their own building so that they could put on performances every night in a run and have time in the day to set out the stage. He explained that the Players were now reconsidering and he was waiting to hear what they wanted to do.
Ian explained that the existing Players' building was in the way as it was the best site for the social building (so that it could be accessed easily by the public and out of the secure area) but that the building was a terrapin and could be moved.

Mrs Barnes asked what would happen to the Shinfield Park site if the new headquarters is not located there. Met. Office explained that the training would be moved off the site and that the site would probably be disposed of.

AO
27.6.00

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: Bill Davies

FROM: Angela Odell.

DESTINATION FAX No: 943 0002

DATE: 28.6.00

TIME: pm.

SUBJECT: Met. Office

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES (Inc. this cover sheet): 3

Please see attached comments from our listed Building's Officer.
Also a list of questions from me.
Are you coming to the Committee meeting tonight?

Environmental Services Department, P.O Box 157, Civic Offices, Shute End,
Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1WR. Tel (0118) ~~9740428~~. Fax (0118) 9746484.
9746445

Green Transport Plan is proposed, including a possible shuttle bus service to Winnersh Triangle Station to collect staff, many of whom currently live in Bracknell and Wokingham. A contribution is also proposed to highway improvements in the local area, which may include re-modelling the roundabout and the WDC scheme for proposed road improvements to the B3270.

Planning Issues.

6.05 The site is within a settlement boundary and an initial assessment has not identified any obvious physical or visual site objections. The main issues are therefore considered to be the strategic ones of potential pressures on housing and transport. Regarding housing, this is essentially considered to be an issue for central Berkshire as a whole in this case. The agents have pointed out that the proposal is essentially a relocation of existing staff from offices nearby in Bracknell, and that a new settlement for up to 2,500 houses is proposed to be nearby. The extent to which additional housing pressure is a concern will depend partly if not mainly on what happens to the existing vacated sites in Bracknell; in particular the amount of new housing (if any) which could offset this potential pressure, and the amount of office/ employment floorspace which would add to pressure in any mixed use redevelopment. The highway officer will assess the effect of the proposal on highways and transport.

The alternative site at Beaufort Park in Bracknell Forest BC is outside a settlement boundary and in a gap between settlements.

Consultations

6.06 WDC expect to be consulted on the proposal at Beaufort Park, and we have sent consultations to Bracknell Forrest BC, Reading BC and the Joint Strategic Planning Unit (amongst others).

Equal Opportunities Implications

6.07 None

Financial Implications

6.08 Contributions towards highway improvements locally are proposed. Other contributions towards services and infrastructure may be requested.

Consultations with Parish and Town Councils/Voluntary Sector Organisations

6.09 Shinfield Parish Council and Earley Town Council have been consulted and any comments received will be reported.

Green Transport Plan is proposed, including a possible shuttle bus service to Winnersh Triangle Station to collect staff, many of whom currently live in Bracknell and Wokingham. A contribution is also proposed to highway improvements in the local area, which may include re-modelling the roundabout and the WDC scheme for proposed road improvements to the B3270.

Planning Issues.

6.05 The site is within a settlement boundary and an initial assessment has not identified any obvious physical or visual site objections. The main issues are therefore considered to be the strategic ones of potential pressures on housing and transport. Regarding housing, this is essentially considered to be an issue for central Berkshire as a whole in this case. The agents have pointed out that the proposal is essentially a relocation of existing staff from offices nearby in Bracknell, and that a new settlement for up to 2,500 houses is proposed to be nearby. The extent to which additional housing pressure is a concern will depend partly if not mainly on what happens to the existing vacated sites in Bracknell; in particular the amount of new housing (if any) which could offset this potential pressure, and the amount of office/ employment floorspace which would add to pressure in any mixed use redevelopment. The highway officer will assess the effect of the proposal on highways and transport.

The alternative site at Beaufort Park in Bracknell Forest BC is outside a settlement boundary and in a gap between settlements.

Consultations

6.06 WDC expect to be consulted on the proposal at Beaufort Park, and we have sent consultations to Bracknell Forrest BC, Reading BC and the Joint Strategic Planning Unit (amongst others).

Equal Opportunities Implications

6.07 None

Financial Implications

6.08 Contributions towards highway improvements locally are proposed. Other contributions towards services and infrastructure may be requested.

Consultations with Parish and Town Councils/Voluntary Sector Organisations

6.09 Shinfield Parish Council and Earley Town Council have been consulted and any comments received will be reported.

Environmental Implications

6.10 Will be assessed when the application is reported to the Committee for observations to be sent to the Met. Office.

Time Constraints

6.11 As the new accommodation is required by the Met. Office by the end of 2002, observations from WDC are required as soon as possible.

Background Papers	Department Where Held
Planning Application O/2000/1714	Environmental Services

Angela Odell

16.06.00

WARD: Shinfield

6.00 APPLICATION O/2000/1714 PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE TO SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

Purpose of Report

6.01 To advise members of receipt of the above application.

Suggested Action

6.02 To ask members to note receipt of the above application and to advise officers of any concerns or requests for further information.

Background Information

6.03 The Meteorological Office is consulting WDC regarding its proposed development under arrangements used by government departments under Circular 18/84. (The Meteorological Office are part of the Ministry of Defence.)

The agents have explained that the Met. Office is a world leader in meteorology and climatology and is the forefront of scientific and technological development. Its existing headquarters buildings in Bracknell are outdated and too costly to be worth modernising, and are inconveniently located in several buildings. The proposal for new building at their Shinfield Park site has been made because they already own it. (It currently accommodates their training operation.) This site is also attractive to them as it would strengthen existing links with the European Centre for Medium Weather Forecasting (on adjacent land) and with Reading University. The Met. Office is also consulting with Bracknell Forest BC under Circular 18/84 with regard to the construction of a similar, alternative headquarters building at their Beaufort Park site. (Beaufort Park is sited north of Nine Mile Ride and east of Old Wokingham Road in Bracknell Forest BC.) Following both consultations, The Met. Office will consider their position with regard to relocation. At present relocation away from the Reading-Bracknell area has not been considered in detail, nor have other non Met. Office owned sites in the locality. The future use of the Met. Office's London Road, Bracknell site will be the subject of a planning brief to be prepared in conjunction with Bracknell Forest BC. It is envisaged that a mixed use redevelopment could take place on the site, including opportunities for new housing.

The Proposal

6.04 The proposal is in outline for a 33,351 m² headquarters office/computer/ ancillary teaching building, car parking, a social building (including creche) and an accommodation block for students. The indictive plans show a 3 storey office block and a decked car park with 750 spaces . About 1,500 staff are expected (nearly all transferred from Bracknell). All existing buildings on the site would be demolished except the Grade II Listed Lodge. The main access would be directly onto the existing roundabout on Shinfield Road. A

Angela Odell

From: Chris Hamilton
Sent: 03 July 2000 16:58
To: Angela Odell
Subject: RE: SAI contributions towards library provision.

Angela:

I don't know anything at all about this and don't attend SAI meetings.

I would be interested in any further information you can glean from whoever chairs SAI.

Best regards

Chris

Chris Hamilton
Head of Libraries and Lifelong Learning
Wokingham District Council
Shute End
Wokingham, Berks RG40 1WN

Tel: 0118 974 6261
Fax: 0118 974 6135
Mobile: 08701 664382

-----Original Message-----
From: **Angela Odell**
Sent: Monday, July 03, 2000 3:37 PM
To: Chris Hamilton
Subject: SAI contributions towards library provision.

Dear Chris

Application O/2000/1714 - Met Office and Application F/2000/1799 - Foster Wheeler
I understand that at this morning's meeting you requested contributions towards library books for both the above applications. Please advise me of the amount of money you consider appropriate in each case.

Reagrds

Angela

Angela Odell

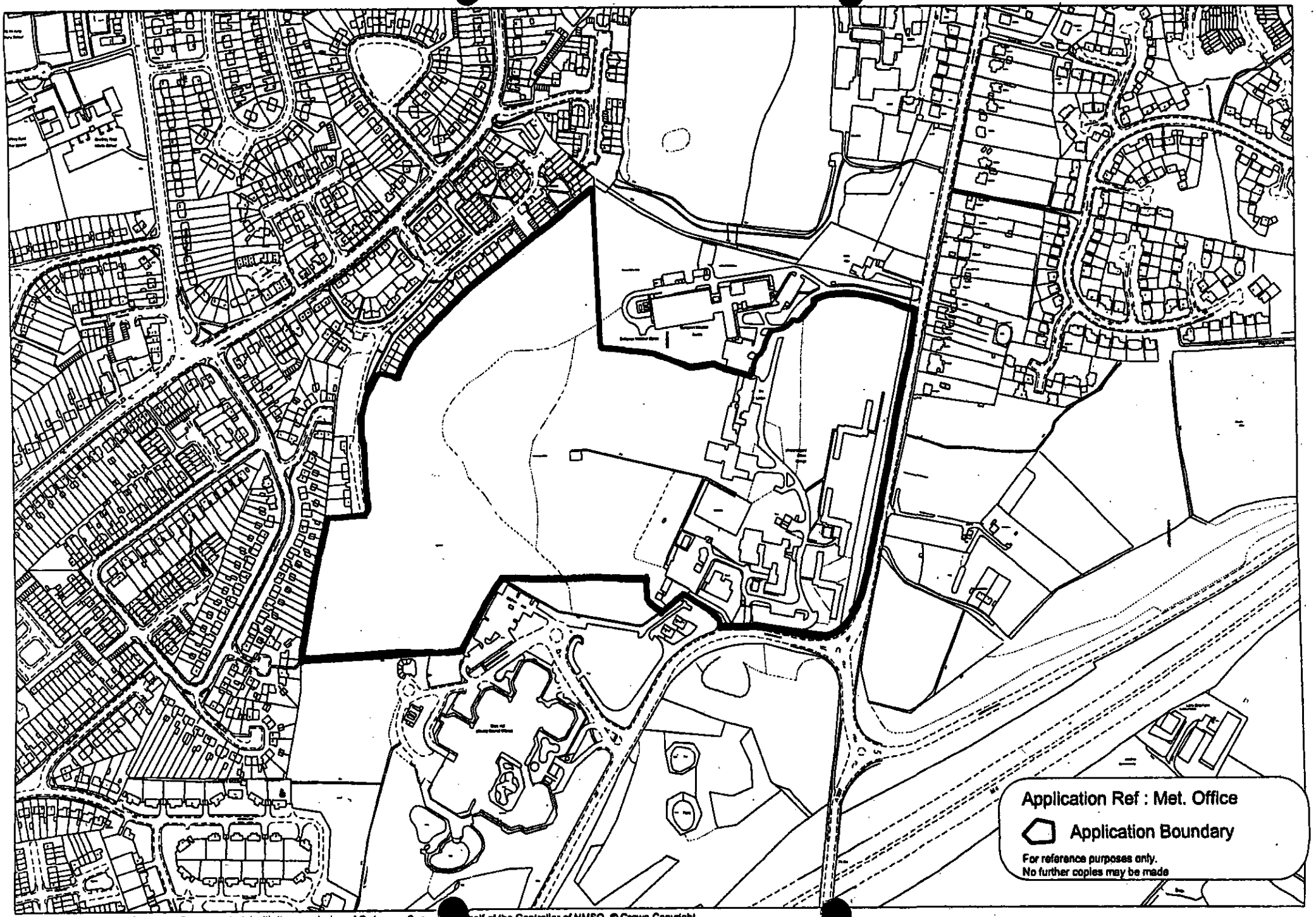
To: Chris Hamilton
Subject: SA! contributions towards library provision.

Dear Chris

Application O/2000/1714 - Met Office and Application F/2000/1799 - Foster Wheeler
I understand that at this morning's meeting you requested contributions towards library books for both the above applications. Please advise me of the amount of money you consider appropriate in each case.

Reagrds

Angela

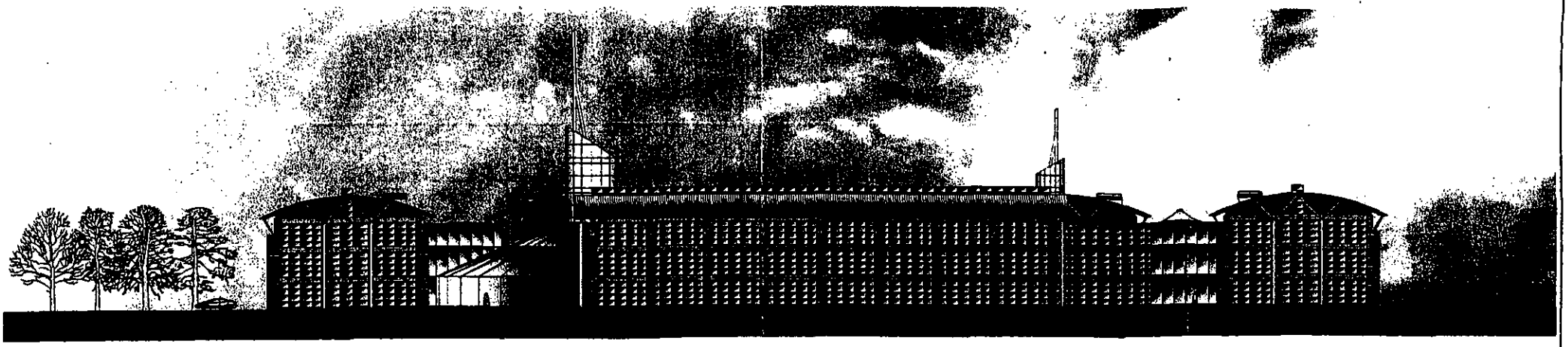


This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

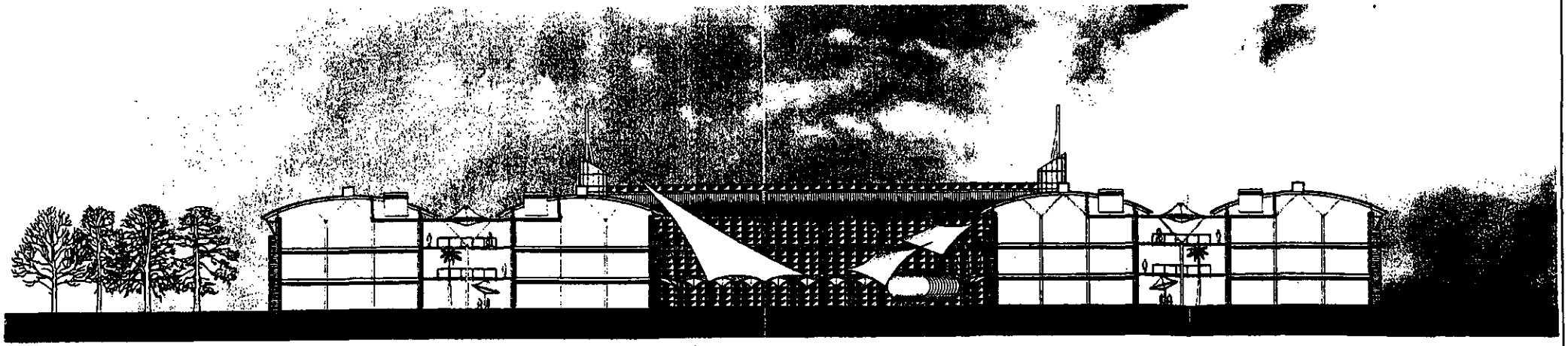
Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council

N
W E

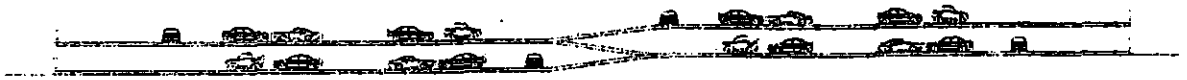
Indicative Plan



Typical elevation main building (east)



Typical section main building (west - east)



Typical section car park (west - east)

Project
Met. Office relocation
Shinfield Park, Reading

Drawing Title
Typical Section & Elevation
Option S4B

Date	Scale	Drawn by
08-05-09	1:250 (A1) 1:500 (A3)	NPB
Project No	Drawing No	Revision
9906	SK008	-

Barton Willmore
Architecture

Tel. 0118 974 6315 (Direct Line) 0118 974 6313 (Fax)

Date 18 January 2000

Your ref.

My ref. KS/KC

CONFIDENTIAL

Cllr Nigel Rose
Cllr Annette Drake
Cllr Malcolm Bryant
Cllr Anthony Pollock
Cllr Barry Patman

Director of Environmental Services
Environmental Services Department
P.O. Box 153
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WL
Main Switchboard (0118) 974 6000
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 - Wokingham

SUBJECT: MET OFFICE RELOCATION

I have recently been contacted by the Met Office who are currently located in London Road, Bracknell concerning their proposals for relocation. They need to relocate by the end of 2002 because of the replacement of major computer facilities and would wish to start building in early 2001. The Met Office currently has freehold land in Wokingham on Shinfield Road, north of the M4 (the west side) which is at the moment used as a training facility. This is in addition to the freehold land it owns in Bracknell.

Officers had preliminary discussions with them on their proposals. They are considering an option of relocation of their operation to Shinfield, although they have not yet decided their preferred option. There are a number of issues which arise as follows:

- The provisional proposals as stands would be contrary to the local plan as it would mean a major increase in staff (numbers are not yet clear) over the existing training facility. Whilst the housing allocations for the next Structure Plan are being finalised, it would be unhelpful to increase Wokingham's employment commitment.

- Any relocation would be a massive addition to the employment commitment with the knock on implications for housing. Many employees, however, already live in Wokingham and we may be able to press for the existing Bracknell site to be used for housing.

- There are already many transport problems in the area. There would need to be substantial Section 106 investment if the scheme were to proceed.

- There are substantial alternative employment sites available that are already committed, eg. Green Park, although the Met Office do not own the freehold of these.

I will be meeting with the Met Office on Monday 24 January to discuss further details of their proposals and would be grateful for any views you may have at this stage. I would stress the confidential nature of the issues at the moment as these are pre-application discussions and no planning application has been received.

I understand the Met Office has a board meeting on 25 January at which the issue will be discussed and I therefore look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Karen Satterford

Karen Satterford
Director of Environmental Services

cc: Jane Earl, Chief Executive

C Wood
A Odell.

Angela Odell

From: Andy Glencross
Sent: 06 July 2000 11:08
To: Angela Odell
Subject: Met Office planning Application O/2000/1714

Hi Angela

Having met the ecological consultant on site to discuss the above and it's ecological impact I was expecting to receive a ecological assessment of the site.

In general there seems to be little for ecological concern about this developement. However I am extremely concerned about the tree survey and have absolutley no confidence in the recommendations. The site will have considerable ecological interest in deadwood and old hollow trees, many of which have been marked to be felled or "cleaned up" of their deadwood. I could understand this in the areas adjacent to car parks or buildings but this survey includes the open parkland area as well.

If the recommendations of this tree survey were carried out it would have a catastophic effect on the ecological interest of the parkland areas of the site.

Can you let me know if any supplementary info turns for this application.

I hope this is of some help to you.

Cheers

Andy

P.S. I have just re-read this and feel I must apologise for sounding a bit rabid on this subject. This sort of tree survey does make me angry as I know they get away with it on many occasions.

Angela Odell

From: Andy Glencross
Sent: 10 July 2000 11:42
To: Angela Odell
Subject: Met Office Planning Application O/2000/1714

Hi Angela

Thanks for sending me the Ecological Appraisal for the above. My views are as follows : -

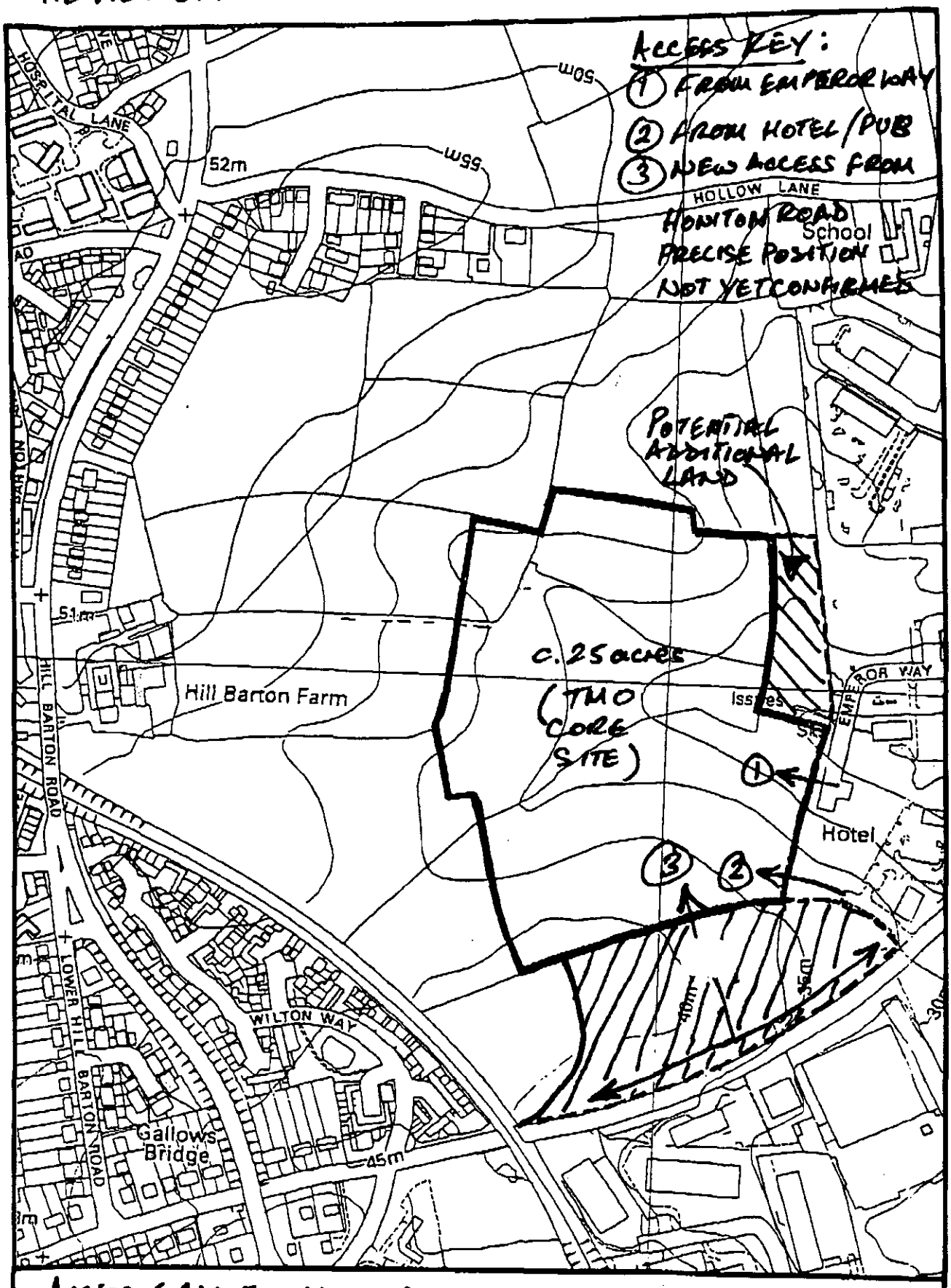
* I broadly endorse the ecological appraisal(EA).
* It should supersede the tree survey with regard to the Veteran Trees and their management. Especially the realignment of the road to save one of the trees.
* The EA states that the species rich grassland will be unaffected by the development. However my reading of the drawings indicates that the proposed car park would in fringe on this habitat, and this needs to be clarified.
* It should be stated that the re-introduction of coppice management would benefit both dormice and the ancient woodland flora. This is implied within the report but not clearly stated.
* I would like to see some form of agreement (Section 106?) to ensure the benefits outlined are achieved in the future.

I hope this is of help to you.

Cheers

Andy Glencross

THE MET OFFICE – LAND TO WEST OF EXETER BUSINESS PARK



ACCESS & ADDITIONAL LAND PLAN
FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Reproduced by courtesy of the Controller of HMSO. Crown Copyright reserved. Licence No. 774359. If applicable, with the consent of Chas E Goad, Cartographers, Old Hatfield, Geographers A-Z Map Co Ltd and/or The Automobile Association. For identification purposes only.

Scale

O.S. Plan No.

GVA Grimley
International Property Advisers
University Gate, Park Row
Bristol BS1 5UB
Telephone 0870 900 89 90
www.gvagrimley.co.uk

SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane, Reading. RG2 9DF
Telephone number 0118 987 3057
Box Office 0118 926 7135

PATRON - ANTON RODGERS

Affiliated to N.O.D.A. *Registered Charity No. 265742*

Tel/No (0118) 941 0305

9, Ashmere Close,
Calcot,
Reading,
Berkshire
RG31 7EN

Please reply to the above address.

Dear Graham,

SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

I am writing further to various meetings, which we have had with you and my fellow officers of the Theatre. At these meetings and in correspondence, you have made various suggestions, offers of assistance etc and we are grateful for the trouble, which you have obviously taken over this.

Whilst we appreciate how complicated the process which you are going through is and, indeed, how protracted, nevertheless we are sure you will appreciate that we are being placed in an equally unenviable position because of the uncertainty. Obviously the public at large are aware of the various planning applications which you have made and are of course, particularly aware of your interest in Shinfield Park. Not only are my members asking what is to become of the Theatre, but we are also due to open our new season next month and I am certain that I shall be asked regularly, by members of our loyal paying audience, what is to become of the Theatre. In addition, as I am sure you will have anticipated, the Press are interested in the position and we simply do not know what to tell them at this stage.

As I am sure you can appreciate, we have to plan our programme at least two years ahead. We need to consider the date for shows and check that these do not clash with other organisations in the area as to both dates and intended shows.

We have already recently experienced a period of being 'shut down' whilst essential repairs were carried out to enable us to obtain our Performance Licence from the Wokingham District Council. As a result of our experience of this hiatus, we know how difficult it is to scotch any rumours of permanent closure. Indeed, we had to make great efforts to advise our supporters that we would be "open for business" in the usual way at the commencement of the next season.

As such, somewhat like you, we do therefore need to have certainty about our future. At our meetings, you have repeatedly invited us to let you know what we require. Having examined what options are available to us at a meeting of my Executive Committee, we have come to the inescapable conclusion that, unless we stay where we are, the Theatre will simply have to close.

The alternative of us moving to another site is, as far as we can see, impossible. Not only would we have to find a suitable site, which would need to be in the immediate locality and which would require professional expertise which we neither have nor could afford, but, assuming such a site was found, in view of our present experience with you, we would need to ensure that the site was available on a long term basis.

Assuming (which I do not) that someone could find us such a site, we would then need to construct a Theatre on that site. You have kindly offered the services of your architect to draw up plans to our specifications, but that really is not the point. One can only design a building when one knows the plot upon which it is to stand and, even armed with a set of plans, the stark fact is that we would have to build a new Theatre on that site with funds that we simply do not have, nor could ever hope to raise.

You mentioned the possibility of obtaining a Lottery Grant. As I am sure you are aware, not only is this a long drawn out process, but we would also need to raise a substantial proportion of the funds ourselves. This is, regrettably, impractical. We have, over the last three years, had to re-wire, re-roof and re-seat the Theatre to comply with current regulations and have also had to re-tarmac the car park. All of these works cost around £50,000, most of which was raised by internal fund-raising events, but we were also very fortunate in obtaining assistance from one or two local charities. All of these sources have limited funds available to them and we also suspect that the amount we have raised over the three years has effectively exhausted these areas. As you will know, building a new Theatre from scratch would cost in excess of £250,000 and there is no way in which we could conceive of raising this sort of money.

We are, as you know, a charitable organisation and any surplus revenues which we raise from shows go on maintaining the fabric of the building and particularly upon sponsoring our youth groups in putting on their productions. We pay for the exorbitant cost of buying/hiring libretti and scores and also the performing rights for the youth groups in order to encourage local children in this activity. We believe, in this, that we are giving to the local community and helping keep the children occupied as well as passing on skills, which they may otherwise not have learned.

So, for all these reasons, as a group we simply could not consider moving, without a substantial degree of help from other sources not available to us within the membership.

I am aware that you have still not decided whether Shinfield Park is to be your final site or not. You have warned us that, if it is not, the land will be declared surplus to MoD requirements and sold to a developer. You have also told us that you are under a responsibility to the taxpayer to obtain the best price available. This we of course understand, but believe that solutions to either scenario are possible whereby we can be left undisturbed. As I have said above and as I am sure you appreciate, we do need to

have certainty as to our future now, whether or not your decision-making process has many months to run.

The first scenario is that Shinfield Park is your preferred site. As we have already pointed out, our site is on a tiny, self-contained corner of your whole site. We really cannot believe that it is vital to remove us for your staff's sports and social club which, we have suggested, could easily be housed behind our building and have the advantage of sharing the access drive down the side without the necessity of involving it in large amounts of security. If, as you profess in your letter of the 20th June, you do have an interest in supporting the local community and co-operating with local organisations, it would surely reflect extremely well on you in the eyes of the Press and the public, as well as Wokingham District Council and Shinfield Parish Council, if you were to give us the land and leave us where we are.

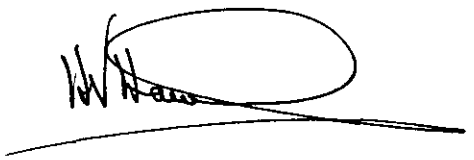
The second scenario is that you sell to a developer. As we all know, any developer would have to set aside a certain proportion of any development as amenity facilities under agreement with Wokingham District Council by way of a Section 106 Agreement. We are but mere minnows as far as the council is concerned, but you obviously have a great deal of influence with them and we would have thought that it would be possible to persuade Wokingham District Council that, leaving the Theatre where it is, satisfied part of their required commitment to ensure provision of local facilities and that they could insist in any planning application that the site be left as it stands and agree with a developer that this was in part satisfaction of their statutory obligations.

In short, we believe that there is a way in which certainty of our future could be obtained now without you having to leave the matter until your final decision as to whether you re-develop the site yourselves or sell on to a local developer has been reached. All that would be needed would be for you to persuade the Council of the points set out in this letter and, if necessary, enter into a direct agreement with the Council under Section 106

about the provision of amenity land. Armed with that, you would then be free to dispose of the site to us in the knowledge that the development value of the land was nil which would then enable you to satisfy any questions raised by the Audit Commission.

I do hope that you will understand that we have explored all of the possibilities and that we really have no option but to request you that we be allowed to stay where we are, because we cannot but feel that any move would be the death of the Theatre.

Yours sincerely



Henry Hawes – Chairman – Shinfield Players Theatre

Graham Cooper,
Relocation Team,
The Met Office,
Powell Duffryn House,
London Road,
Bracknell,
Berkshire.
RG12 2SX

Copies to: -

Chief Executive – The Met Office
The Rt. Hon. John Redwood, MP
Alan Spratling – Leader Liberal Democratic Party – Wokingham District Council
Chairman – Shinfield Parish Council
Col. Malcolm Bryant – Wokingham District Councillor

Views from outside the site

5.47 The indicative proposals show the main part of the proposed headquarters building would be 15m high. The section drawings show that the existing tree belts would largely screen this building and the proposed car park and relocated Alexandra House from views from Shinfield Road, from the lower ground to the west of the site in the vicinity of Woodside Way, from the longer distance view from junction 11 of the M4, and from most of the public footpath on the south boundary of the site.

5.48 The building would be seen from the proposed access, though could be partially screened in the longer term by planting on the internal roundabout. The proposed social building would also be partially seen from Whitley Wood Lane through its own access point. However, the existing Barclay House and Shinfield Players buildings can already be seen from Whitley Wood Lane and proposed additional planting would help screen these views.

Listed Building

5.49 Potential concerns have been expressed by English Heritage and the Council's Listed Buildings' Officer about proposed works to the Listed Building and the effect on the proposed headquarters building on its setting. These concerns would be expected to be taken into account in the design and siting of the proposed buildings in the subsequent detailed application.

Trees and wildlife

5.50 A tree survey and assessment have been submitted. The indicative plans show retention of the main areas of woodland and retention of most of the higher category trees. Any concerns that the Tree Officer expresses about the proposed loss of any individual trees can be expected to be taken into account in the subsequent detailed application. The proposed woodland and wildlife management plan would be expected to provide satisfactory management of the woodland areas and trees on the site and for the protection of wildlife and habitats.

Conclusion on physical and visual impact

5.51 The proposals are indicative but it is considered that they illustrate that in principle a main headquarters building of the size proposed and ancillary accommodation could be acceptably accommodated on the site. The subsequent detailed design and siting proposals would need to ensure that proposed works to, and the setting of, the listed building are acceptable and do not result in the removal of important trees which should be retained.

E. **Shinfield Players** (letter attached)

5.52 The Shinfield Players are currently accommodated in an ex-NAFFI terrapin building on a 6 month lease. The lease has been renewed every 6 months for some years. The Meteorological Office have advised that they consulted the Shinfield Players about the proposal two months before it was submitted to Wokingham District Council and offered them joint-use space in the proposed social building.

5.53 The Shinfield Players, however, consider this unsatisfactory as they wish to own/control their own building so that they can put on performances every night in a run, and set up the stage and retain it through the run. The Shinfield Players are pressing for one of the 3 options listed in their letter to be provided (remain in situ, re-erect the building elsewhere on the site, or the Meteorological Office to provide a new theatre).

5.54 The Meteorological Office and their consultants, however, have explained that the existing site of the Shinfield Players' building is the most suitable site for the proposed social building as it can be separately accessed and used without causing significant security problems regarding the main building and part of the site. They also consider the proposed social building would be more visually in keeping with the redeveloped site.

5.55 The Meteorological Office have also explained that ultimately the Shinfield Players have no right to stay on the site and if the Meteorological Office do not relocate here, then the site is expected to be disposed of, and it would be up to the new owner/operator as to their future. However, the Meteorological Office have said they recognise they have a social responsibility to the Shinfield Players, hope that the matter can be resolved, and that this could mean offering them assistance to relocated off-site. However, it would not mean entirely financing a new replacement building, as the Meteorological Office is publicly accountable for its expenditure and consider that they would be unlikely to be able to justify such expenditure.

5.56 Policy WIC1 states that permission will not be granted for proposals that involve the loss of community facilities unless the authority is satisfied that there is no need for the particular facility or alternative provision is available nearby. Whilst the future of the Shinfield Players has not yet been resolved, this issue should be considered in the overall context and circumstances of the proposal. It is considered that the Council should express its support in principle for the Shinfield Players and to support a resolution of the issue that is acceptable to both parties. (The Shinfield Players' representations will be forwarded to the Secretary of State.)

F. **Services and Infrastructure Contributions**

5.57 Provision of, and contributions towards, highway improvements have been covered in Section C above. The proposed social building would provide a crèche facility which is expected to be operated by a crèche operator. The social building would also provide sports and social facilities for staff and any spare capacity could be let out to local community groups. The Meteorological Office would continue to provide public access to their Meteorological Library in the relocated premises and to provide source material etc. for schools.

G. **Concerns of the Parish Councils and local residents**

5.58 The issues of traffic and housing pressures, trees, ecology, building design and the Shinfield Players have been addressed above. Regarding any potential disturbance from the social club, this is shown to be sited on the site of the

Powell Duffryn House
London Road Bracknell
Berkshire RG12 2SX

Switchboard: +44 (0)1344 420242
Tel: 01344 855047
Fax: 01344 855040
e-mail: gscooper@meto.gov.uk
Ref : M/D(Reloc)/12/1

31 August 2000

Mr J Taylor
The Shinfield Players
18 Keswick Close
Reading RG30 4SD

THE MET. OFFICE - SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

Thank you for meeting with me on 22 August. As promised, please find attached the information from the Scout Association on fund raising.

At our meeting I suggested drawing up a specification of your future requirements and repeat my offer to provide assistance if required. As we agreed I hope to be able to call you on 7 September to inform you of the outcome of the Wokingham District Council planning meeting.

I confirm that we are unlikely to make a firm decision on Shinfield Park until early 2001. If Shinfield Park is to be our new location we anticipate starting the development work in May 2001. If Shinfield Park is not to be used it will be disposed of in due course. As explained at our meeting I clearly cannot guarantee that we will be able to allow the Shinfield Players to remain on our land beyond May 2001.

I will keep you informed of progress and please do call me if I can provide any assistance with your planning or any further information is required.

Graham Cooper – Relocation Team

6) **Shinfield Players Theatre** – Whilst passing reference, relating only to its removal, is made to the existence of this very significant local community facility which is established on the development site, scant regard is given in the proposals to its future well-being. Its future welfare is of paramount importance to this council and the assurances given by Mr Peter Ewins, the Chief Executive of the Met Office at a recent site visit to the current Bracknell facility, were well received by the local council members. Whilst we would wish to leave it to the management of the Shinfield Players to negotiate the details of any proposal for their future, we cannot over-emphasise our anxiety for their continuance.

7) **Section 106 Agreement** – In recognition of the major impact that this proposed development would have in the communities that we represent, we would expect that if the District Council is minded to grant permission, a significant 'developer contribution' would be negotiated with the applicant under Section 106 provision of the Act, taking particular regard to the 'Wish list' of benefits appropriate to our parish, submitted by this council.

In conclusion, we seek assurances that our comments as detailed above, which have taken considerable time and effort by our members to compile, should be reported in full to members of the Development Control Sub-Committee, before any decision is taken.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Sampson

Mrs Tracy Sampson
Assistant Clerk (0118 9885315)

Copies to:
Mr M Bryant, Mr B Patman, Mr A Pollock – District Councilors
Mr H Hawes of Shinfield Players

SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane, Reading. RG2 9DF
Telephone number 0118 987 3057
Box Office 0118 926 7135

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT
POL	TLS 31454
DC AMO	ENF
APP	
CS	

06 JUL 2000

COPIES TO:	ACK:
	FILE:

RL

PATRON — ANTON RODGERS

Affiliated to N.O.D.A. *Registered Charity No. 265742*

Tel/No (0118) 941 0305

9 Ashmere Close,
Calcot,
Reading.
RG31 7EN

4TH July 2000

Dear Angela,

With reference to our telephone conversation of today, I am writing to express my concern regarding the relocation of the Meteorological Office at Brackniell to the Shinfield Park site to combine with the European Medium Range Weather Forecasting Centre and the Meteorological College. The management of the Shinfield Players Theatre are currently in dialogue with the Relocation Team for this project and plans for the new site have been examined which reveal that where the Theatre is situated, there is the possibility that this area will be used for the erection of a new Sports and Social Club and Crèche and would require the removal of the Theatre.

This initially caused us great concern, with indications that the Theatre would have to close down permanently with the catastrophic loss of this facility to the community. When one considers that the Theatre boasts a membership of 217, 80 of which are Youth Group members whose ages range from 8 to 18 years, teaching them discipline and confidence, plus the fact that this facility presents a new production every five weeks, bringing live theatre, not only to Shinfield, but the surrounding area as well, would be a tremendous blow.

The Shinfield Theatre members own the actual building itself and lease the small piece of land from the Ministry of Defence on a 5-year, renewable lease. Part of the lease agreement is that the Ministry can give us 6 months notice to quit with minimum compensation and it would be beyond our means to raise sufficient monies to buy a piece of land and erect another Theatre. This prompted the Theatre Management and its members to consider mounting a serious campaign to "Save Shinfield Theatre". Fortunately the Met' Office have not followed this line and as stated are in productive dialogue with us, and recent indications are that they have no intention of closing this facility permanently. I am given to understand that there are possibly three offers on the table: -

1. The possibility that the plans may be adjusted to allow us to stay where we are. A suggestion for an alternative site has been submitted to the Relocation Team by us.

2. That the building be dismantled and re-erected on a new site within the complex. Initial reaction to this is that the building would not stand this type of relocation, also it would mean closing down the Theatre for a period with the subsequent loss of an audience and which is very difficult to recapture.

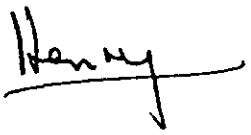
3. That the Meteorological Office would build us a new Theatre with the Shinfield Management and it's members having total autonomy.

As far as the Shinfield Players are concerned this is obviously good news and it is hoped that one of the above suggestions will come to fruition. If this fails then it is the intention of the Theatre management and its members to mount a serious campaign to object most strongly to the closure of this most important facility.

I enclose with this letter a "History of the Shinfield Players and the Shinfield Theatre" which was produced to celebrate the new millennium and hope that you find it of interest. It relates the founding of the Shinfield Players and what has been achieved to the present date.

Finally, since the purchase of this building and its erection on its current site in 1970, members, both past and present have raised enormous amounts of money to ensure that the building was of a good standard, safe and comfortable for its audiences and, since its opening, it is estimated that a figure approaching £250,000 has been spent on this project. Over the last two years alone a total of £42,000 has been spent on rewiring the Theatre completely bringing it up to the latest E.C. Standards. A new roof covering has been put in place ensuring the building remains watertight and the Car Park has been resurfaced for the comfort and safety of our patrons. This Theatre is a true Community Theatre and all persons of whatever race or creed are welcome to use this facility. It would be a complete tragedy if this Theatre were forced to close down.

Yours sincerely



Henry Hawes – Chairman Shinfield Players Theatre.

Angela Odell,
Environmental Services Department,
Planning Services,
P.O.Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berks.
RG40 1WR

Correspondence to: - Secretary, J.Taylor, 18 Keswick Close, Reading. RG30 4SD. Tel 0118 942 4606
Accounts to: - Treasurer, R.D.Fullbrook Esq, 28, Fontwell Drive, Reading. RG30 2HG. Tel 0118 959 0785
President: M.J.Burrell Esq. Chairman: Henry Hawes

MEMO

From : Graham Cooper

M/D(Reloc)/12/1
3 July 2000

To : Peter Ewins - Chief Executive
Philip Mabe - Finance Director
Steve Noyes - Director of Relocation

Copy :

SHINFIELD PARK - PLANNING APPLICATION

I attended the Wokingham District Council Development Control Committee on 28 June. A copy of the papers presented to the meeting by Angela Odell the development control officer is attached. Visitors are allowed to attend, but not to comment although several of the councillors spoke to me at the end of the meeting.

The chairman reminded the committee of how it is unusual to have preliminary site of a planning proposal and hoped that it did not set a precedent for the future. He continued by thanking the Officers of the Council for presenting the application at this stage and recognised the importance of the application. He had not been present at the visit to The Met. Office, but understood it had gone very well and been of benefit to the members and officers of the Council who were able to take part. The committee was reminded that the application was being presented for information and initial comment and that time would be given at a later stage to discuss the application in full.

A discussion then took place led mainly by our visitors from the previous Monday evening. They were enthusiastic about the Office and repeated the key messages from Monday evening of a world class organisation, diverse product range and major investment in new computing facilities in 2003. The main concerns were, as anticipated, about the traffic and use of the land vacated at the London Road site. Some of the concerns noted which are covered in the note from the development control officer (attached) were a little misguided and a response has been provided.

The subject of the Shinfield Players was not raised at the meeting. It is however a 'hot topic' and I received a phone call from the Player's treasurer last Friday asking for confirmation of his Chairman's view that we were building a new Theatre for them. I referred him to my last letter (copy attached) and the offer of our assistance should we move to Shinfield Park. This is consistent with our statement at the Wokingham Council visit, but does not amount to a guarantee to provide a modern, fully equipped Theatre.

Graham Cooper

Powell Duffryn House
London Road Bracknell
Berkshire RG12 2SX

Switchboard: +44 (0)1344 420242
Tel: 01344 855047
Fax: 01344 855040
e-mail: gscooper@meto.gov.uk
Ref : M/D(Reloc)/12/1

20 June 2000

Mr H Hawes
The Shinfield Players
9 Ashmere Close
Calcot
Reading RG31 7EN

THE MET. OFFICE - SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

Thank you for your letter of 30 May and for the meeting of 23 May. As explained on 23 May the designs are for illustrative purposes required as part of the planning clearance process. The actual design and layout may differ from this. I have passed a copy of your letter to Barton Willmore our architects for this phase of the relocation.

In your letter you note the "suggestion that we submit reasons why we should stay at our present location". My suggestion was in a wider context including the possibility that you may not be able to remain in your current position, but would remain in operation in the locality. I should re-iterate that nothing has been decided at this stage. I believe it is to the benefit of all parties to bring things out into the open so that we can see if it is possible to achieve an acceptable compromise.

As previously indicated, whatever the outcome is of the planning submission there is a high likelihood that the area currently occupied by the Shinfield Players will be required for development. I note your requirement for a building under your own exclusive control. This clearly rules out the possibility of sharing a Met. Office facility at Shinfield Park which was our initial approach.

I am clearly not in a position to advise the Shinfield Players on any future course of action, but can obviously see the benefit to you of relocating to a suitable site in the locality. The Met. Office has an interest in supporting the local community and to co-operate with local organisations. With this in mind I propose that we continue to maintain a dialogue as our plans evolve. Clearly I am unable to offer any guarantee on behalf of a future owner of Shinfield Park should ownership of the site be transferred.

For information, the planning clearance papers were submitted to Wokingham District Council on 9 June.

Graham Cooper – Relocation Team

Meeting with Shinfield Players

23 May 2000 ***File No M/D (Reloc)/12/1-B***

1. Graham Cooper updates on plans. Explains location issues.

2. Shinfield Players will oppose if Met Office goes ahead. Arguments:

   (a) dangerous

   (b) gridlock

   (c) community facility

3. Bill goes through plans

4. Terms of lease – 6 months notice – agreed.

   £9,000 – exasperation!

4. GC asks SP what they think we could do to help them.

5. "SP have to be autonomous."

6. GC says we would like to help. Tell us what help you would like.

7. GC – our judgment is that SP cannot stay.

8. SP intend to put application in for listed status on the building.

9. SP say that building would not survive another move.

10. GC explains traffic improvements.

SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane, Reading. RG2 9DF
Telephone number 0118 987 3057
Box Office 0118 926 7135

PATRON - ANTON RODGERS

Affiliated to N.O.D.A. *Registered Charity No. 265742*

9, Ashmere Close,
Calcot,
Reading,
Berks.
RG31 7EN
Tel/No 0118 941 0305

30th May 2000

Dear Graham,

SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

With reference to our last meeting at the Shinfield Players Theatre on the 23rd May with yourself and the Planning Consultants, concerning the relocation of the Met Office at Bracknell to Shinfield Park and your suggestion that we submit our reasons why we should stay at our present location.

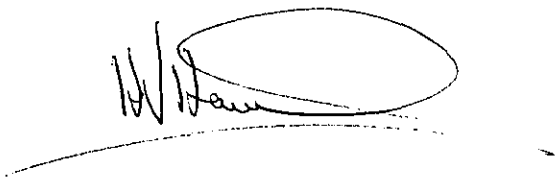
Obviously since this meeting, the Executive Committee have given a great deal of thought to this situation and it was made obvious that we would oppose most strongly the loss of this most important facility to the community and to this end will mobilise a great deal of support. The consensus of opinion is that there appears to be no logical explanation why the proposed site of the sports and leisure complex and crèche should be located at the position indicated on the plans. It is fully appreciated that should the Met Office relocate to Shinfield Park, to which we have no objection, is that it would be a high security establishment, but we can see no reason why we would be a threat to the security, being positioned where we are on the very fringe of the complex. To this end we would suggest that consideration be given to an alternative site for this proposed development and offer the suggestion of looking at the area on the western side of the Shinfield Players Theatre site, nearest the Foster Wheeler building. This area is reached by the service road that runs in front of the Theatre and is currently used as a small car park, seldom used, together with a number of unused buildings. The area suggested would easily support the sports and social complex and at the same time have its own independent entrance via the service road.

If this suggestion is not acceptable, then could consideration be given to the construction of a similar size theatre on a suitable site in the locality to allow this facility to continue for the benefit of the populace?

To give you some idea of the loss of live theatre to Berkshire and Hampshire, should this facility close. I enclose for your information a booklet, compiled for the millennium, relating the history of the Shinfield Players and the Shinfield Players Theatre together with two newspaper cuttings from the local newspapers, reporting on our last production. This gives a fair indication of the high standard of productions at this venue.

I await your comments with interest,

Yours sincerely



Henry Hawes – Chairman, Shinfield Players Theatre

ENC: A History of the Shinfield Players and the Shinfield Players Theatre
Latest newspaper cuttings

Mr Graham Cooper,
Relocation Team,
The Met Office,
Powell Duffryn House,
London Road,
Bracknell,
Berkshire.
RG12 2SX

Correspondence to: - **Secretary**, J.Taylor, 18 Keswick Close, Reading. RG30 4SD. Tel 0118 942 4606
Accounts to: - **Treasurer**, R.D.Fullbrook Esq. 28, Fontwell Drive, Reading. RG30 2HG. Tel 0118 959 0785
President: M.J.Burrell Esq. **Chairman:** Henry Hawes

The Met.Office

Powell Duffryn House
London Road Bracknell
Berkshire RG12 2SX

Switchboard: +44 (0)1344 420242
Tel: 01344 855047
Fax: 01344 855040
e-mail: gscooper@meto.gov.uk
Ref : M/D(Reloc)/12/1

18 May 2000

Mr H Hawes
The Shinfield Players
18 Keswick Close
Reading RG30 4SD

Dear Mr Hawes,

THE MET. OFFICE - SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

Work has continued on our proposals for locating the main Met. Office complex at Shinfield Park. As discussed previously, it is our intention to commence the formal consultation process on the proposed development with Wokingham District Council at the end of May.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with appropriate representatives of the Shinfield Players to outline our proposals. Our consultants Barton Willmore will be available to explain the more technical aspects.

I look forward to hearing from you and would appreciate it if you could call me on the above number to arrange a suitable time and date. I am aware that Barton Willmore are unavailable from the afternoon of 24 May until 30 May.

Yours Sincerely

Graham Cooper

Graham Cooper – Relocation Team

HO. Kevin Scott – POS
Bill Hawes – Barton Willmore

The Met.Office

Powell Duffryn House
London Road Bracknell
Berkshire RG12 2SX

Switchboard: +44 (0)1344 420242
Tel: 01344 855047
Fax: 01344 855040
e-mail: gscooper@meto.gov.uk
Ref : M/D(Reloc)/12/1

10 May 2000

Mr H Hawes
The Shinfield Players
18 Keswick Close
Reading RG30 4SD

Dear Mr. Hawes,

SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

1) Thank you for meeting with me on 19 April and for giving me a guided tour of the theatre. I found the historical and other information that you sent to me very interesting. The Shinfield Players have clearly had a busy time since their inception.

2) As we discussed at our meeting:

a. The Met. Office will be formally consulting with Wokingham District Council on the proposed development on The Met. Office College site at Shinfield Park

b. Our intention is to formally submit our proposals at the end of May 2000.

c. Until the plans are somewhat further advanced it is not possible for me to give any indication on the effect of our proposals with regard to the Shinfield Players.

3) If I can be of any further assistance please contact me at the above address.

Yours Sincerely

Graham Cooper

Graham Cooper – Relocation Team

HC: Kevin Smith for POS

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
Defence Lands Service (South)
Blandford House, Farnborough Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2HA

Telephone 01252 348904
01252 24431 Ext 3904
Fax 01252 348932

Mr A Eden
Property Manager
Meteorological Office Headquarters
Room 224
London Road
Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 2SZ

Your reference
M/Met O (SS)/12/23/2
Our reference
DLS/S/4834/108/2/KE/LS
Date
28 November 1994

Tony,

MET OFFICE COLLEGE - SHINFIELD PLAYERS

Further to your minute dated 4 November 1994 concerning the lease to the Shinfield Players (please note they are not an encroachment) my comments are as follows:

Terms of Lease

- Term five years from 1 April 1992.
- Expiry date 31 March 1997.
- Rent £1,200 per annum exclusive payable quarterly in advance.
- Tenant responsible for all repairs to the building throughout the lease term and for the removal of the building at the expiration of the lease.
- MOD has reserved rights for water and sewage connections and rights of entry for repairs to such services over leased area.

Under the terms of their lease the Shinfield Players are covered by the security of tenure provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and should you wish to oppose their claim for a new tenancy for redevelopment grounds then under the 1954 Act providing you need vacant possession of the premises at the end of the lease (and this means the entire premises) then the Court would not be bound to grant Shinfield Players a new lease. Compensation is payable at the end of the lease based on the rateable value of the premises.

You could also under the Act offer alternative premises to the Shinfield Players but these would have to be suitable bearing in mind all the good will associated with the present lease and the Courts would have to be satisfied that the premises were a suitable alternative.

You could also on the termination of the current tenancy intend to occupy the leased area for the purposes of a business carried on by you, ie MOD, and any re-jigging of the accommodation at Shinfield Park under the Option Study should therefore take account of this possibility.

If I can be of further help please let me know.

K Edwards.

MISS K EDWARDS
Senior Land Agent
for Defence Land Agent DLS (South)

RENTAL DEMANDS

Shinfield Players Amateur Dramatic Society
Shinfield Park
Reading, Berks..

Address for Rent Demand
C/o Mr Raymond Fullbrook (Treasurer)
28,Fontwell Drive
Tilehurst
Reading
Berkshire
RG30 4QR
Tel: 0118 9590785

Invoice reminder to Usha Mistry Div Accountant

File Ref: M/Met O(SS)/12/23/2

Terms Of Lease: 5yrs at £1600.00 per annum
paid quarterly on:Jan 1,Apr 1,Jul 1,Oct 1
Com Date: Aug 4,1997
Determined: Aug 3,2002

Receipts				
Period		Amount	Auth	
From	To	£	Date	Notes
Oct 1,1997	Dec 31,1997	100.00	Mar 18, 1999	Balancing amount for period
Jan 1,1998	Dec 31,1998	1600.00	Mar 18, 1999	Arrears for period
Jan 1,1999	Mar 31,1999	400.00	Mar 18, 1999	Arrears for period
Apr 1,1999	Jun 30,1999	400.00	Mar 18, 1999	Advance charge for period
Jul 1,1999	Sept 30,1999	400.00	Jun 09, 1999	Advance charge for period
Oct 1,1999	Dec 31,1999	400.00	Sept 22,1999	Advance charge for period
Jan 1,2000	Mar 31,2000	400.00	Dec 07,1999	Advance charge for period
Apr 1,2000	Jun 30,2000	400.00	Mar 14,2000	Advance charge for period

MET. OFFICE – SHINFIELD PARK – p.970

Shinfield Players – comments circulated
Correction – end of para. 5.56 – should be forwarded to the Me[illegible] not the Sec. Of State. (see para. 5.08)

Members will be familiar with this proposal as presented to Committee on 28 June, members site visit and visit to existing London Road premises.

Photos available if wish to see anything

The LPA is giving its observations as a consultee, not determining a planning application.

Recommendation is in para. 5.03 under 'Suggested Action'

- To express support and raise no objection in principle to the proposal, subject to a legal agreement for Transport measures (including Green Travel Plan) and woodland management plan, and to conditions.
- Also to recommended to propose a substantial reduction in the amount of B1 floorspace and a high number of residential units in the Planning Brief for the proposed future redevelopment of the London Road site.
- And to express concerns about the future of the Shinfield Players.-

Transport
Highway officer considers that the proposal can be acceptable, but subject to further detailed assessment and consideration of the necessary infrastructure improvements to both the highway network and public transport. The proposed development not to proceed until the package of measures has been agreed and endorsed by the Development Control Committee.

Photos
1. Listed Building (front)
2. Listed Building (rear) + other buildings
3. Looking west across site
4. Looking south to Shire Hall (proposed car park between)
5. Shinfield Players
6. Up Shinfield Road
7. Up to roundabout
8. West across roundabout

Health – the only ionising radiation equipment on site will be receiving and not transmitting.

Trees – Preliminary assessment shows a considerable number of trees to go – in area of proposed access area and building. In access area initially considers none to which would really object, and belts of trees adjacent to Shinfield Road/Whitley Wood Lane would remain. But would want siting and design of building to take more account of retaining existing trees.

MET. OFFICE – SHINFIELD PARK – p.970

Shinfield Players – comments circulated
Correction – end of para. 5.56 – should be forwarded to the Met. Office not the Sec. Of State. (see para. 5.08)

Members will be familiar with this proposal as presented to Committee on 28 June, members site visit and visit to existing London Road premises.

Photos available if wish to see anything

The LPA is giving its observations as a consultee, not determining a planning application.

Recommendation is in para. 5.03 under 'Suggested Action'

- To express support and raise no objection in principle to the proposal, subject to a legal agreement for Transport measures (including Green Travel Plan) and woodland management plan, and to conditions.
- Also to recommended to propose a substantial reduction in the amount of B1 floorspace and a high number of residential units in the Planning Brief for the proposed future redevelopment of the London Road site.
- And to express concerns about the future of the Shinfield Players.-

Transport
Highway officer considers that the proposal can be acceptable, but subject to further detailed assessment and consideration of the necessary infrastructure improvements to both the highway network and public transport. The proposed development not to proceed until the package of measures has been agreed and endorsed by the Development Control Committee.

Photos

1. Listed Building (front)
2. Listed Building (rear) + other buildings
3. Looking west across site
4. Looking south to Shire Hall (proposed car park between)
5. Shinfield Players
6. Up Shinfield Road
7. Up to roundabout
8. West across roundabout

Health – the only ionising radiation equipment on site will be receiving and not transmitting.

Trees – Preliminary assessment shows a considerable number of trees to go – in area of proposed access area and building. In access area initially considers none to which would really object, and belts of trees adjacent to Shinfield Road/Whitley Wood Lane would remain. But would want siting and design of building to take more account of retaining existing trees.

SHINFIELD PLAYERS THEATRE

Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane, Reading. RG2 9DF
Telephone number 0118 987 3057
Box Office 0118 926 7135

PATRON — ANTON RODGERS

Affiliated to N.O.D.A. *Registered Charity No. 265742*

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT
POL	TLS 3145
DC AMO	ENF
APP	
CS	

06 JUL 2000

COPIES TO:	ACK:
	FILE:

RL

Tel/No (0118) 941 0305

9 Ashmere Close,
Calcot,
Reading.
RG31 7EN

4TH July 2000

Dear Angela,

With reference to our telephone conversation of today, I am writing to express my concern regarding the relocation of the Meteorological Office at Bracknell to the Shinfield Park site to combine with the European Medium Range Weather Forecasting Centre and the Meteorological College. The management of the Shinfield Players Theatre are currently in dialogue with the Relocation Team for this project and plans for the new site have been examined which reveal that where the Theatre is situated, there is the possibility that this area will be used for the erection of a new Sports and Social Club and Crèche and would require the removal of the Theatre.

This initially caused us great concern, with indications that the Theatre would have to close down permanently with the catastrophic loss of this facility to the community. When one considers that the Theatre boasts a membership of 217, 80 of which are Youth Group members whose ages range from 8 to 18 years, teaching them discipline and confidence, plus the fact that this facility presents a new production every five weeks, bringing live theatre, not only to Shinfield, but the surrounding area as well, would be a tremendous blow.

The Shinfield Theatre members own the actual building itself and lease the small piece of land from the Ministry of Defence on a 5-year, renewable lease. Part of the lease agreement is that the Ministry can give us 6 months notice to quit with minimum compensation and it would be beyond our means to raise sufficient monies to buy a piece of land and erect another Theatre. This prompted the Theatre Management and its members to consider mounting a serious campaign to "Save Shinfield Theatre". Fortunately the Met' Office have not followed this line and as stated are in productive dialogue with us, and recent indications are that they have no intention of closing this facility permanently. I am given to understand that there are possibly three offers on the table: -

1. The possibility that the plans may be adjusted to allow us to stay where we are. A suggestion for an alternative site has been submitted to the Relocation Team by us.

2. That the building be dismantled and re-erected on a new site within the complex. Initial reaction to this is that the building would not stand this type of relocation, also it would mean closing down the Theatre for a period with the subsequent loss of an audience and which is very difficult to recapture.

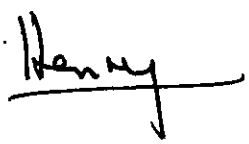
3. That the Meteorological Office would build us a new Theatre with the Shinfield Management and it's members having total autonomy.

As far as the Shinfield Players are concerned this is obviously good news and it is hoped that one of the above suggestions will come to fruition. If this fails then it is the intention of the Theatre management and its members to mount a serious campaign to object most strongly to the closure of this most important facility.

I enclose with this letter a "History of the Shinfield Players and the Shinfield Theatre" which was produced to celebrate the new millennium and hope that you find it of interest. It relates the founding of the Shinfield Players and what has been achieved to the present date.

Finally, since the purchase of this building and its erection on its current site in 1970, members, both past and present have raised enormous amounts of money to ensure that the building was of a good standard, safe and comfortable for its audiences and, since its opening, it is estimated that a figure approaching £250,000 has been spent on this project. Over the last two years alone a total of £42,000 has been spent on rewiring the Theatre completely bringing it up to the latest E.C. Standards. A new roof covering has been put in place ensuring the building remains watertight and the Car Park has been resurfaced for the comfort and safety of our patrons. This Theatre is a true Community Theatre and all persons of whatever race or creed are welcome to use this facility. It would be a complete tragedy if this Theatre were forced to close down.

Yours sincerely



Henry Hawes – Chairman Shinfield Players Theatre.

Angela Odell,
Environmental Services Department,
Planning Services,
P.O.Box 157,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
Berks.
RG40 1WR

European Theatre Centre
European Theatre Centre
European Theatre Centre
The Lodge
Wansfell College
Wansfell College
Wansfell College

T 66 NE | SHINFIELD | POUNDGREEN (north side)
Grazeley

7/2 | Poundgreen Farmhouse

II

Hall house, now farmhouse. Early C16 extended C17, altered early C18 and C19. Mostly brick with vitreous headers in part, and part timber framed. Old tiled gabled roof. L-plan with 2 x 1 framed bays and outshot at rear in angle. 2 storeys. Flanking chimneys on left and C17 chimney on ridge in centre. South front: toothed brick eaves. 3 irregular bays of 3-light small pane C19 casements, similar but taller on ground floor, window on right blocked; to left of this a C20 small pane glazed door. Above this a date stone inscribed P B 1730 East Front: One bay gable with one bay of 2-light C19 iron casements to right of centre, planked entrance door to left with pent tile roof on carved brackets. Interior: Large inglenook chimney and some timber frame exposed.

SU 76 NW | SHINFIELD | SHINFIELD ROAD (east side)

8/7 | Lane End Farmhouse

II

Farmhouse. C16 altered and extended C18, C19 and C20. Brick, one end gable timber framed with brick infill; old tile gabled and hipped roof. L-plan with outshot and stair turret at rear in angle. 2 storeys with one chimney on ridge. Road front: cement plinth, brick oversailing and toothed eaves. 3 irregular bays late C18 3-light casement, centre 2-paned light opening side lights of one pane; similar on ground floor but with large square C19 square bay in middle with 4-light casement and one return light. C20 entrance door in stone surround to right of this. Rubbed brick segmental arches over windows.

SU 76 NW | SHINFIELD | SHINFIELD ROAD (west side)

8/6 | Lodge to Meteorological Office

II

Lodge, now offices. Late C18 extended C19, altered C20. Rendered brick, hipped slate roof. Rectangular plan with C19 service wing on south. 2 storeys. With 3 chimneys irregularly spaced on roof. East front: narrow cornice on pairs of cut brackets. 5 bays sash windows those on ground floor without glazing bars; central 6 panelled door with arched radiating and weathered fanlight, under C19 Doric porch with pairs of columns and entablature.

T 66 NE | SHINFIELD | POUNDGREEN (north side)
Grazeley

7/2 | Poundgreen Farmhouse

II

Hall house, now farmhouse. Early C16 extended C17, altered early C18 and C19. Mostly brick with vitreous headers in part, and part timber framed. Old tiled gabled roof. L-plan with 2 x 1 framed bays and outshot at rear in angle. 2 storeys. Flanking chimneys on left and C17 chimney on ridge in centre. South front: toothed brick eaves. 3 irregular bays of 3-light small pane C19 casements, similar but taller on ground floor, window on right blocked; to left of this a C20 small pane glazed door. Above this a date stone inscribed P B 1730 East Front: One bay gable with one bay of 2-light C19 iron casements to right of centre, planked entrance door to left with pent tile roof on carved brackets. Interior: Large inglenook chimney and some timber frame exposed.

SU 76 NW | SHINFIELD | SHINFIELD ROAD (east side)

8/7 | Lane End Farmhouse

II

Farmhouse. C16 altered and extended C18, C19 and C20. Brick, one end gable timber framed with brick infill; old tile gabled and hipped roof. L-plan with outshot and stair turret at rear in angle. 2 storeys with one chimney on ridge. Road front: cement plinth, brick oversailing and toothed eaves. 3 irregular bays late C18 3-light casement, centre 2-paned light opening side lights of one pane; similar on ground floor but with large square C19 square bay in middle with 4-light casement and one return light. C20 entrance door in stone surround to right of this. Rubbed brick segmental arches over windows.

SU 76 NW | SHINFIELD | SHINFIELD ROAD (west side)

8/6 | Lodge to Meteorological Office

II

Lodge, now offices. Late C18 extended C19, altered C20. Rendered brick, hipped slate roof. Rectangular plan with C19 service wing on south. 2 storeys. With 3 chimneys irregularly spaced on roof. East front: narrow cornice on pairs of cut brackets. 5 bays sash windows those on ground floor without glazing bars; central 6 panelled door with arched radiating and weathered fanlight, under C19 Doric porch with pairs of columns and entablature.

T 66 NE | SHINFIELD | POUNDGREEN (north side)
Grazeley

7/2 | Poundgreen Farmhouse

II

Hall house, now farmhouse. Early C16 extended C17, altered early C18 and C19. Mostly brick with vitreous headers in part, and part timber framed. Old tiled gabled roof. L-plan with 2 x 1 framed bays and outshot at rear in angle. 2 storeys. Flanking chimneys on left and C17 chimney on ridge in centre. South front: toothed brick eaves. 3 irregular bays of 3-light small pane C19 casements, similar but taller on ground floor, window on right blocked; to left of this a C20 small pane glazed door. Above this a date stone inscribed P B 1730 East Front: One bay gable with one bay of 2-light C19 iron casements to right of centre, planked entrance door to left with pent tile roof on carved brackets. Interior: Large inglenook chimney and some timber frame exposed.

SU 76 NW | SHINFIELD | SHINFIELD ROAD (east side)

8/7 | Lane End Farmhouse

II

Farmhouse. C16 altered and extended C18, C19 and C20. Brick, one end gable timber framed with brick infill; old tile gabled and hipped roof. L-plan with outshot and stair turret at rear in angle. 2 storeys with one chimney on ridge. Road front: cement plinth, brick oversailing and toothed eaves. 3 irregular bays late C18 3-light casement, centre 2-paned light opening side lights of one pane; similar on ground floor but with large square C19 square bay in middle with 4-light casement and one return light. C20 entrance door in stone surround to right of this. Rubbed brick segmental arches over windows.

SU 76 NW | SHINFIELD | SHINFIELD ROAD (west side)

8/6 | Lodge to Meteorological Office

II

Lodge, now offices. Late C18 extended C19, altered C20. Rendered brick, hipped slate roof. Rectangular plan with C19 service wing on south. 2 storeys. With 3 chimneys irregularly spaced on roof. East front: narrow cornice on pairs of cut brackets. 5 bays sash windows those on ground floor without glazing bars; central 6 panelled door with arched radiating and weathered fanlight, under C19 Doric porch with pairs of columns and entablature.

Angela Odell

To: Chris Hamilton
Subject: RE: Library contributions

dear Chris

Met. office is for relocation from Bracknell headquarters with an expected 1400 extra employees on the Shinfield Park site. They will be transfers from Bracknell. The site is on the west side of Shinfield Park, north of the M4 and south of Crosfields school and the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting.

Foster Wheeler expect an additional up to 450 employees. The site is the ex-BCC Offices just north of the M4.

I hope this is helpful information, but if you wish for anything further, please contact me.

Angela

-----Original Message-----
From: Chris Hamilton
Sent: 21 July 2000 16:54
To: Angela Odell
Subject: RE: Library contributions

Angela:

I've heard of the Met Office development but not the Foster Wheeler one. What is it and where?

Does either development increase the District's daytime population? If not, all we could do is look for voluntary contributions. If that is the way we're going, I would like some information on the scale and location of each development and the opportunity to discuss possibilities informally with the developers.

Many thanks

Chris

Chris Hamilton
Head of Libraries and Lifelong Learning
Wokingham District Council
Shute End
Wokingham, Berks RG40 1WN

Tel: 0118 974 6261
Fax: 0118 974 6135
Mobile: 08701 664382

-----Original Message-----
From: **Angela Odell**
Sent: Thursday, July 20, 2000 8:33 AM
To: Chris Hamilton
Subject: Library contributions

Dear Chris

Do you wish me to persue possible library contributions for:
Application O/2000/1714 - Met. Office, and
Application F/2000/1799 - Foster Wheeler.

If so for what/how much?

Thanks

Angela ext.6445

MET. OFFICE – COMMITTEE 28.6.00

Purpose of report now is to bring the application to members attention at an early stage, to take any questions and for any comments or concerns to be voiced.

Some members, officers and reps. From Shinfield p.c. visited the Met. Offices in Bracknell on Monday evening. The Met. Office offered to arrange a site visit for members to the proposed site in Shinfield, and if members wish to visit the site suggest arrange day/time at end of meeting.

Main issues in report are potential traffic generation and journey-to-work, potential of proposal to add to housing pressures (what happens to the vacated Backnell sites), any on site physical or visual issues and situation of the Shinfield Players. Members should also be aware that Bracknell Forest D.C. have received a consultation on a similar proposal as an alternative at Beaufort Park.

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Timescale Circ. 18/84 requires us to submit our obs. within 8 weeks, i.e. by 4 August, but I have just written asking for an extension of time incase it is needed. JSPU been consulted. Their next committee not until 8 Sept., but I have been advised by phone today that because of the length of time until their next Committee they will deal with it under delegated powers (this includes consultation with their chairman and vice-chairman).

Consultations (to date)
Listed Buildings & Conservation Officer

1. Requests more information regarding the removal of the recent additions.
2. Considers the proposed main building is too close, given its size and scale.

My reply – I have spoken with the planning consultants today. They are to arrange a meeting with Harold to discuss these points. N.B. Proposal is in outline with no siting fixed – design/siting is indicative only due to 'bid process' Met. Office have to go through. I can explain more about this tonight if you wish.

Shinfield Players

The Shinfield Players are currently accommodated ~~Currently~~ in an ex.NAFFI terrapin building on a 6 months lease. The Met. Office have advised that ~~to~~ Shinfield Players, that they had been consulted about 2 months ago and the Met. Office had offered them space in the proposed social building. However, they had said that they wanted their own building so that they could put on performances every night in a run and

e.g. in relation to the Listed Building.

Site Details

Site area – 17.6 ha.

Western woodlands is a WHS

Proposal	sq.m.	
Grade II Lodge	428	
Residential block	2,266	
Headquarters blg.	33,351	of which 29,283 sq.m. is office, including 4,645 for ops. room

Social blg.	1,115	(few staff)
Total	37,160	

Transport

Propose alteration to northern Black Boy roundabout, + contribution to local off-site highway works (£1m.+ - this information given to me verbally). Investigating shuttle bus to Winnersh Triangle. Join with Foster Wheeler.

5. Wildlife
A management agreement will satisfy this.

6. Landscape
BW will make a response to our landscape officer's comments, but they will essentially be dealt with at detailed design stage.

7. Existing Bracknell sites
Note on floorspaces provided by BD.

8. Financial contributions
Could possibly secure under Sec.299a.
(i) highways – see under 2. Above
(ii) and (iii) – GC explained they have a Met. Library open to the public and provide source material etc. for schools.
(iv) see 5. above
(v) crèche – will be in the proposed social building and operated by a commercial operator for staff – possibly also for FW staff.

Health – the only ionising radiation equipment on site will be receiving and not transmitting.

9. Alternative use of site
IT/GC confirmed that if the Met. Office do not relocate to Shinfield Park then the site would have to be disposed of. (Would become vulnerable to alternative development – most likely housing)

10. P. C. comments
NF to look at traffic comments. AO explained other issues should be covered by the appraisal of issues in report to Committee. Any not so covered will need to be commented on/addressed in the report.

11. Shinfield Players
GC explained the Met. Have offered SP use of the social building, but SP have so far declined as want their own building so they can put on performances unrestricted. SP have been on a regularly renewed 6 month lease for about 30 years. The Met. Office are only obliged to give them 6 months notice and £9,000 compensation. SP spent money on the car park and roof *after* they were advised of the Met. Office's plans for relocation. However, the Met. have stated they intend to assist them to relocate. However, public money could not be spent by the Met. on building a new theatre on a new site for them.
IT explained that the wooden hut would not be visually suitable at the entrance area to the whole site.
AO explained that if the matter was unresolved then their letter would be forwarded as required under Circ. 18/84.

MET. OFFICE - NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON 26.7.00 AT WDC

Present: Ian Tant and Bill Dawes of Barton Willmore, Neil Findlay of WSP, Graham Chapman of Met. Office, John Mitchell, Tom Callaghan, Harold Sanders and Angela Odell of WDC, Alan Lewis of Parkman.

(Nos. refer to item nos. on the agenda)

1. Listed Building

(Letter from English heritage handed round).
It was understood by all parties that as the application was an outline with no RM to be fixed, details of the works to the LB (including whether all the extensions are to be demolished) would be expected to be provided, and consideration of the design and siting of the proposed headquarters building would be expected to take into account the setting of the LB, at the detailed application stage.

2. Traffic/GTP

- TC/AL expressed concern that the shuttle bus to Winnersh Triangle would not be able to meet the projected journey times in the rush hour and that there may not be sufficient places on the bus(es) to accommodate all the passengers. – NF to look at this.
- GC explained that Met. Staff tend to have a commitment to sustainability.
- GC explained that the Met. would expect to occupy the building for at least the next 25 years, and therefore very unlikely it would be sold off privately before this.
- NF/IT the Met. would construct the new roundabout at the proposed entrance and would look at funding a new roundabout to the south (minus the funds already available from Green park etc. – TC to check out the position on what money would be available). (The necessary land for any road link from approx. the FW entrance to the southern Black Boy roundabout can be available.) Ideally the roadworks would be done at the same time as construction of the Met. Office building which needs to be built by Spring 2003. Site selection would be confirmed in April 2001. On 8.9.00 Met. Office will issue invitations to 5 'partners' to tender.
- NF to respond to the points made in AL's memo and to continue discussions with TC/AL.
- AO advised that a member had referred to the gap in the existing cycleway route.

3. Views

IT explained photomontages expensive to produce accurately and of limited help where design and siting not fixed. Will provide a section of long view from junction 11 looking east.

4. Trees

AO explained that Neil Etherington had only recently received the tree report, and that if there were any important objections these should be taken into account in the detailed siting of the buildings.

12. Timetable
AO explained intended to put this application and WDC's comments on the Bracknell application to the Committee on 6/9. The application should be going Reading's committee on 16/8 and Phillip Gill of the JSPU had said he would try to get their comments to WDC by 7/8.

Angela Odell
27.7.00

AGENDA FOR MEETING ON MET.OFFICE
Wednesday 26 August 2000 at 2pm at WDC

1. Listed Building
   (i) Setting of Listed Building
   (ii) Alterations to Listed Building

2. Traffic/Green Transport Plan

3. Views from outside site – Photomontages (as for FW)
   View from Junction 11 (from exit from M4 eastbound carriageway looking east to site)

4. Trees

5. Wildlife (comments of Andy Glencross - attached)

6. Landscape Officer's comments (attached) ← do we detailed design — we can make comments for it.

7. Existing sites in Bracknell to be vacated
   (i) London Road – how much existing floorspace, and how much floorspace/residential units could the site be redeveloped for?
   (ii) Other Bracknell sites –how much floorspace will remain in B1 use as it is only leased?

8. Financial Contributions (could be by an agreement under Section 111 of the 1972 Local Government Act)
   (i) Highways —
   (ii) IT equipment to local schools?
   (iii) Contribution to library books? –
   (iv) Woodland management/wildlife conservation
   (v) Crèche
   (~~vi~~) ~~Air quality monitoring~~ Health.

9. What will happen to the Shinfield Park site if the Met. Office do not relocate here?

10. Comments of Shinfield Parish and Earley Town Councils (attached)

11. Shinfield Players

12. Other comments
   (i) 2 letters of objection/comment
   (ii) John Redwood (attached)
   (iii) Environment Agency (attached)
   (iv) Police Architectural Liaison Officer (attached)

13. Timetable
   (i) JSPU not yet commented

(ii) I am on holiday from 9-28 August. Reports for Committee on 6 September go to printing on 29 August.

Angela Odell
24.7.00

Angela Odell

From: Andy Glencross
Sent: 10 July 2000 11:42
To: Angela Odell
Subject: Met Office Planning Application O/2000/1714

Hi Angela

Thanks for sending me the Ecological Appraisal for the above. My views are as follows : -

* I broadly endorse the ecological appraisal(EA).
* It should supersede the tree survey with regard to the Veteran Trees and their management. Especially the realignment of the road to save one of the trees.
* The EA states that the species rich grassland will be unaffected by the development. However my reading of the drawings indicates that the proposed car park would in fringe on this habitat, and this needs to be clarified.
* It should be stated that the re-introduction of coppice management would benefit both dormice and the ancient woodland flora. This is implied within the report but not clearly stated.
* I would like to see some form of agreement (Section 106?) to ensure the benefits outlined are achieved in the future.

I hope this is of help to you.

Cheers

Andy Glencross

TO: **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL** FROM: Environmental Design
Angela Odell

DATE: 18 July 2000

Location:	Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield
Proposal:	OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF BUILDING FOR USE AS METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE
Application Number:	O/2000/1714

In response to your consultation dated 21 June and 7 July 2000 for the above application, the landscape comments are as follows:

The site is located in a prominent position on top of a ridgeline with the steeper slopes to the west heavily wooded. The adjacent Foster Wheeler building is very prominent in views from the south and west above the wooded scarp face. The site is sensitive in terms of location and prominence within the landscape and incorporates parkland type planting with the extensive areas of vegetation on the site contributing to the overall wooded character of the area.

I do not consider that the proposals as shown, take account of the landscape as a whole, due to the lack of integration of both the car park and the building into the existing landscape character and setting, nor do they relate well to each other. The design of the building, itself, is very insular and inward looking, not integrating into the existing landscape structure of the parkland setting. As the building is set in an extensive area of open ground, why is there a need for a courtyard area? when it could be much more closely related to the existing landscape. The building could also be a landmark building in terms of sustainability and have an innovative environmental design policy to consider energy conscious design, waste minimisation and water conservation, which would be wholly appropriate for its ultimate use.

The position and extent of the car park is fairly arbitrarily placed on site, intruding into the parkland type landscape and is a massive structure relating little to the building nor the site. A car parking area, however, could be effectively designed so that it is a much less intrusive feature within the landscape and has a better relationship with the building. It may be appropriate in this setting to have some underground parking to reduce the impact of extensive areas of hard surfacing.

The eastern boundary of the site with Shinfield Road is designated as a Green Route with a significant tree belt along the road within the site. This will be

breached in part by the new road junction and access into the site, where a substantial amount of vegetation will be removed as a result of these alterations. In the Landscape Appraisal document, Photograph 2 demonstrates that at present there are no views of the existing buildings within the site due to existing landscape features. This is rather academic as the proposals clearly show that these features will be removed, opening up wide views into the site from Shinfield Road from this point, to the proposed building which will be clearly visible above the new planting proposed at this junction.

In principle I have no objection to a building of the size and scale of the proposal being built within the site, however the proposals as shown are not acceptable in terms of the integration of the building and car park within a parkland type setting and character of the existing landscape. A more sensitive and sustainable design solution could be provided to take account of the existing landscape structure of the site.

Catherine Brimble
Landscape Architect

0118 988 5315

Shinfield
Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs. J Barnes, 36 Ryhill Way, Earley, Reading, Berkshire. RG6 4AZ
Tel/Fax: 0118 9547115

15th July 2000

Mrs A Odell
Case Officer
Wokingham District Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire

Dear Mrs Odell

Application No: 0/2000/1714 – Outline Proposals for Met Office facilities at Shinfield Park.

At the meeting of our Planning and Transportation committee on 5th July, it was resolved to record the comments below in respect of the above outline application in our parish. The proposals contained therein do not appear in the District's Local Plan but will have a major impact on our community and environment, and it is upon these impacts that we have concentrated our comments. However, we deplore the fact that we have been given only days to comment on a four volume submission. We must also record our grave concern that the application went before a Development Control Sub-Committee on 28th June, prior to our comments being called for by 14th July. For that determining committee not to have the local council comments before them, prior to making a decision on such a major development is unacceptable.

1) **Introductory Remarks** – Whilst recognising the applicant as a first class Globally acclaimed organisation that would bring prestige to the area with support from many local residents, we have major concerns about the application as submitted and wish to record a number of challenges as detailed below. Our members were also irritated by the constant reference to the location being in Reading (with even media focus being on the views of Reading MPs when it is outside their area), when in fact it lies entirely in our parish, in the district of Wokingham.

Continued....

2) **Traffic**- The implications of traffic generation by siting 1,400 new jobs in a full employment area which already has a road system operating over-capacity is a prime concern. The entire Transport Assessment whilst impressive in magnitude being an inch thick, is of little value assessing traffic generation and impact as it is essentially based on the 1996 Baseline Model, which is in itself flawed and inappropriate for predicting the future. This fact was established as Part 1 of the recent Public Inquiry into the District Local Plan, where it was used simply as a tool for making comparisons.

The base Model was developed for one purpose only: to assess and compare traffic mitigation measures proposed by the three development consortia competing to build 2,500 houses south of the M4. It was made clear, at the time of its construction that it was not suitable for predicting future traffic conditions, as the database did not reflect actual current Origin and Destination figures. The statistics used had been adjusted downwards to enable the Model to run, as otherwise, modeling a system at capacity with the software available, was not possible. Furthermore, the Baseline Model should not be used for predicting future traffic, as it cannot predict queue lengths, it cannot predict waiting times and it cannot model the peak-hour load spreading.

Therefore, basing conclusions, such as traffic levels and flows at Junction 11, on this Model, is a useless exercise. In addition, it was known that there was significant peak load spreading and latent demand, which could not be assessed correctly. It is noted that in the traffic analysis that peak load spreading has not been taken into account and no consideration of latent demand mentioned. It is clear that considering a single peak hour period in the case is not sufficient. Peak loading exists over a longer period than one hour and the peak hour is certainly not conveniently defined by an hour on the clock. Also, any communting analysis must take account of travelling time, which this does not.

The analysis provided does not consider both best and worse case traffic scenarios, nor does it look at the necessary 15 years ahead to prudently consider what effects the further growth in this important strategic developments area will have. We consider these are minimal and essential considerations for the community, which has long term aspirations for their living here.

In considering the traffic effects, it has been suggested that the 2,500 houses to be built south of the M4 will be available to the Met Office staff. This is NOT the case. These houses are being built to satisfy the needs of Reading's 20,000 jobs at and around Green Park. There will therefore be long term commuting for at least 750 of the Met Office employees. This is totally out of line with Government guidance on these matters and out of line with the emerging Local Transport Plan.

Continued...

We welcome the commitment to producing a Green Travel Plan which must be part of any Full Application and should include undertakings to support bus services from Winnersh Triangle to Shinfield Park, which would run through our community at Shinfield Rise, to the benefit of our parishioners. Furthermore, whilst endorsing the logic behind restricted parking provision, we are extremely concerned that this could lead to indiscriminate parking on the surrounding unrestricted road system, to the detriment of our residents.

Were the Council mindful to approve the application, major contributions should be sought to local infrastructure improvements including the funding of the proposed Option 2 Link Road Scheme, with a preferred siting alongside the motorway, rather that an proposed through the middle of a valuable wildlife habitat bounded by Whitley Wood Lane and the M4 motorway.

A final point on traffic issues is that in page 17, para 5.02 of the Planning Statement quotes from the Structure Plan, that in the interests of flexibility, new development may be permissible, where they do "not duly add transport problems of pressures for housing development". Our members are of the firm view that this proposal will do both.

3) **Economic and Employment Considerations** – There would appear to be an incomplete consideration of the other planning applications for the area. Noticeably absent are considerations for all other local commercial developments, which could generate additional 2,500 jobs within one kilometer of the Met Office site: these include Foster Wheeler plus the NIRD site, Church Farm and the Advanced Research Centre. In addition a further 25,000 new jobs will be generated within three kilometers of the site at green park, Reading International Business Park, Reading Gate and the Oracle Centre. As there is full employment in Shinfield, all these jobs will have to be filled by commuters. This scenario must be accurately assessed using the correct tools and current data.

Shinfield Parish is already an extremely stressed economic area. There is a total imbalance in housing provision compared to employment provision. House prices are now totally beyond households on below £30,000to £50,000pa. There is totally inadequate affordable housing provision. The communities are rapidly becoming unbalanced with the numbers of teachers, nurses, tradesman, local government workers and other modest income work groups declining. Surveys have indicated that there is less than 1% unemployment in the area. There is therefore no requirement for additional jobs.

The parish population is already forecast by WDC to grow by an unacceptable 70% in the period 1997-2006 and will rapidly create even more imbalance, as there will be few if any additional lower income group families able to migrate to this 'hot spot'. The planned provision of 500 affordable houses will be taken up by local residents already on the house waiting lists made longer by years of neglect in this sector of the housing market whilst planning has been developer led. Adding further to this growth requirement in this period is clearly not acceptable. Indeed it is even possible, given the need to build and sell at rates in excess of 500 houses a year.

Continued...

4) **Ecology** – The site has very considerable biodiversity, with two types of deer seen regularly, a wide ranging bird population in the ancient woodland which contains the rich flora associated with such sites and will be designated a Wildlife heritage Site (WHS). A substantial buffer zone around the WHS will be required and this needs to be reviewed.

Poor if any provision is made for wildlife corridors to and from the WHS. Within close proximity are two other undeveloped sites, Pearmans Corpse and the wildlife area to the south of Foster Wheeler building, between Whitley Wood and the M4 motorway.

The site is on the prominent SW to NE ridge line with its unpredictable hydrogeology. As the applicant's Ecological Appraisal concedes, the site has been neglected over a long period of time and numerous gullies and run-offs on the north west slopes have caused problems over the years and are clearly not understood by the current land occupiers. Despite local representations, the MOD has failed to respond to resident's fears, and flooding and subsidence caused by water run-off from the ridge has been experienced. It would appear that deliberate failure to keep gullies clear for the purpose of their creation and in some cases deliberately blocking them, has been the practice over many years. This problem has not been addressed and with further development of the site will inevitably be worse.

The site is very well wooded and it would be an unacceptable loss to see numerous mature trees unnecessarily sacrificed. We are concerned about the removal of groups of trees as summarised on page 26 without knowledge of the numbers in each group. However, it is recognised that some trees will inevitably have to go. Careful monitoring of this will be needed and permission for named individuals from the parish to have access to the site for this purpose is requested. Access should be provided on request at 24 hours notice. All individuals would observe whatever safety regulations were in force at the time of inspection. We would urge that the perimeter screening, which we are encouraged to see is to be retained, should be improved for the benefit of residents in adjoining properties.

Finally on matters of ecology, we request that in any consideration of approval for this application, consideration should be given to imposing conditions opening up the areas of Ancient woodland for employment by members of the local community and general public.

5) **Building Design** – We trust that the visuals provided, depicting the proposed building perspectives (Typical Section & Elevation Option S4B) are authentic in terms of the portrayed roofline, with only a couple of slender masts. We consider that any further masts or antennae should be strictly controlled.

Continued...

6) **Shinfield Players Theatre** – Whilst passing reference, relating only to its removal, is made to the existence of this very significant local community facility which is established on the development site, scant regard is given in the proposals to its future well-being. Its future welfare is of paramount importance to this council and the assurances given by Mr Peter Ewins, the Chief Executive of the Met Office at a recent site visit to the current Bracknell facility, were well received by the local council members. Whilst we would wish to leave it to the management of the Shinfield Players to negotiate the details of any proposal for their future, we cannot over-emphasise our anxiety for their continuance.

7) **Section 106 Agreement** – In recognition of the major impact that this proposed development would have in the communities that we represent, we would expect that if the District Council is minded to grant permission, a significant 'developer contribution' would be negotiated with the applicant under Section 106 provision of the Act, taking particular regard to the 'Wish list' of benefits appropriate to our parish, submitted by this council.

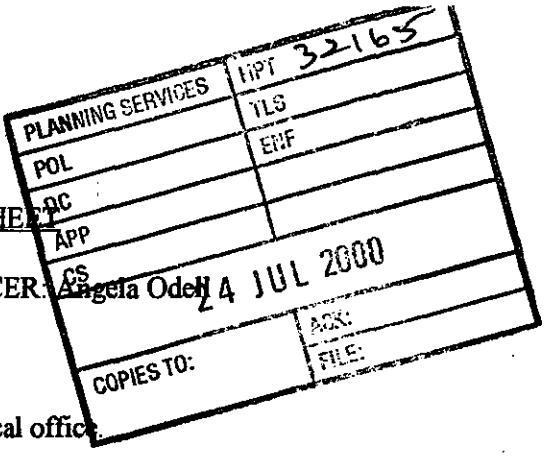
In conclusion, we seek assurances that our comments as detailed above, which have taken considerable time and effort by our members to compile, should be reported in full to members of the Development Control Sub-Committee, before any decision is taken.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Sampson

Mrs Tracy Sampson
Assistant Clerk (0118 9885315)

Copies to:
Mr M Bryant, Mr B Patman, Mr A Pollock – District Councilors
Mr H Hawes of Shinfield Players



TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATION SHEET

APPLICATION NO: F/2000/1714 PLANNING OFFICER: Angela Odell

PARISH: EARLEY (Shinfield Parish Application)

PROPOSAL: Erection of building for use as a meteorological office

ADDRESS: Shinfield Park

APPLICANT: The Met. Office

Thank you for allowing Earley Town Council the opportunity to comment on this application. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is an extremely prestigious proposal, of paramount concern to the Town Council is the amount of additional traffic which will be generated on a road infrastructure which is already extremely overstretched. Whilst the road improvements, which form part of this application are noted, it was felt that these improvements were flawed. Councillors felt that the proposed new roundabouts should be of a larger scale, and that an additional roundabout was required outside the entrance to the Foster Wheeler Building.

The Town Council is currently involved in compiling a Transport Policy for the Town, which is still at a very initial stage. However, one of the major problem areas which has been identified is the amount of through traffic through the Town and also the amount of congestion at the two access points onto the M4, i.e. junction 11 and junction 10 via the A329 and the Loddon Bridge junction. It was the intention of the Town Council that the document would be presented as a whole to the District Council. However, in view of this planning application and the other current application in this area at the former Shire Hall site, Councillors have requested that one of the proposals to be contained in the Transport Policy should now be given serious consideration by the District Council. This is the creation of a junction 10a onto the M4, which could be created at a suitable location off Lower Earley Way. Councillors felt that consideration could be given to making this junction access only, to avoid traffic leaving the motorway at this point and thus increasing the problem of through traffic in the Town. As previously stated, the Town Council's Transport Policy is at a very initial stage, and it is acknowledged that this suggestion requires considerable more research and thought. However, it is felt that the current applications being considered would give the District Council an ideal opportunity to seriously consider Councillors' suggestion of the creation of this additional junction onto the M4.

Of concern also to Councillors when they discussed this application was the increased pressure which would be created on the already over-stretched housing stock. It is acknowledged that some staff may not wish to relocate, although this will, of course, create its own problems in an increase in commuter traffic. However, this area of the District is already under pressure to allow more residential development on the very valuable green gaps on the Shinfield Parish boundary, and this proposal can only serve to increase this pressure.

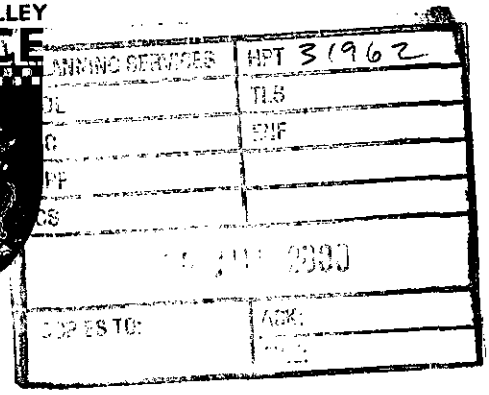
Finally, Councillors noted with some concern the loss of the Shinfield Players Theatre. It is requested that, should the Development Control Sub-Committee be mindful to approve this application, a condition of the approval is that the Met Office satisfactorily negotiates with the Shinfield Players to ensure that suitable alternative accommodation is found for them. It is also requested that a condition be imposed requiring the running of shuttle buses between the site and the proposed park and ride scheme near to junction 11.

A copy of these observations has been forward to the Head of Engineering Services.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: 20 JUL 2000

CLERK TO EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

THAMES VALLEY
POLICE



P.C. Dave STUBBS
Crime Prevention Design Adviser
(Berks)

Thatcham Police Station
20, Chapel Street
Thatcham, BERKS.
RG18 4QL
Tel. 01635 295156
Fax. 01635 295126

Date 14th July 2000

For 'Secured by Design' standards and application forms
Visit the 'SBD' website at :-
www.securedbydesign.com

Mrs. A. Odell
Planning Department
Wokingham District Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
BERKS.
RG40 1WR

Your Ref. 1714

Dear Mrs. Odell.

Meteorological Office - Shinfield Park.

Thank you for the details of the plans in respect of the above site.

There is no objection to the principle of this proposal on crime or disorder grounds. Being a defence estates establishment, there will be minimum levels of security specified as part of the project requirements.

In the light of the duty on local authorities to do all that they reasonably can to prevent crime & disorder under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, the potential crime risks facing this proposal include burglary & other offences related high tech. scientific sites.

The council can help to discharge its duty in respect of its planning function under Sec. 17 by taking the above comments into account when arriving at its decision.

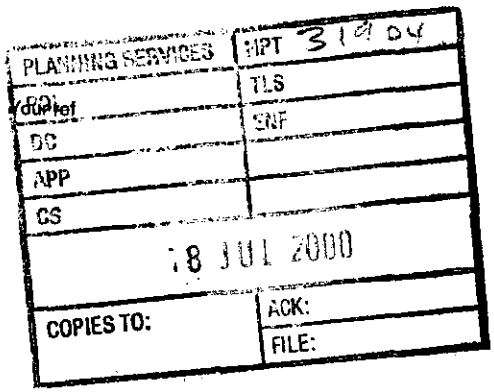
I trust this will be of assistance and thank you for your consultation.

Yours sincerely.

P.C. Dave STUBBS
Thames Valley Police
CPDA. (Berks.)

Babtie Environmental

School Green
Shinfield
Reading
Berkshire RG2 9HL
Tel 0118 988 1555
Fax 0118 988 1666



Babtie

A member of Babtie Grou

Our ref PF

17 July 2000

Angela Odell
Wokingham District Council
Planning Services
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1WR

Dear Angela

SHINFIELD PARK MET OFFICE RELOCATION

I thank you for the plans you sent this morning. I have checked this location out against the Wokingham Sites and Monuments Record and there are no archaeological sites. As the development is on a plot of land already substantially disturbed, I cannot see there are grounds for any requests for archaeological works on the site.

Yours sincerely

P FASHAM
Principal Archaeologist

Group Offices:
Aberdeen
Abingdon
Aylesbury
Bedford
Belfast
Birmingham
Bristol
Cambridge
Cardiff
Chelmsford
Coventry
Croydon
Derby
Edinburgh
Exeter
Glasgow
Inverness
Ipswich
London
Maidstone
Newcastle upon Tyne
Oxford
Preston
Reading
Shrewsbury
Wakefield
Wallingford
Westminster

Ankara
Bangkok
Hong Kong
Jakarta
Kuala Lumpur
Manila
Prague
Singapore

Babtie Group Ltd
Registered Office:
95 Bothwell Street
Glasgow G2 7HX
Registered in Scotland
No: 141100

INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Registered Environmental Impact Assessor

S8291

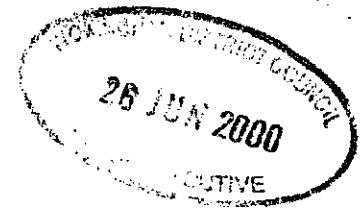
Recycled Paper

THE RT. HON. JOHN REDWOOD, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

→ Angela O'Dell.

23 June 2000



Ms Jane Earl
Chief Executive
Wokingham District Council
P O Box 150
Shute End
Wokingham
Berks RG40 1WQ

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT 31283
POL	TLS
DC	ENF
APP	
CS AMO	
03 JUL 2000	
COPIES TO:	ACK:
	FILE:

Dear Jane

Thank you for your letter concerning the proposal to relocate the Met Office in Wokingham. I have not yet received representations on this proposal. I suggest the Council take soundings on how many Met Office staff currently live in the Wokingham District and would like it to stay in this area, and give proper attention to the traffic problems the site could generate.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Shuttleworth / Angela O'Dell FYI.

Email: redwoodj@parliament.uk

Our ref: SP\2000\001979\001
Your ref: O/2000/1714

Date: 4th July 2000

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

PLANNING SERVICE 31602
POL
DC
APP
CS
10 JUL 2000
COPIES TO: ACK:
FILE:

District Planning Officer
Wokingham District Council
Council Offices,
Shute End,
Po Box 157
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG11 1BN

For the attention of: Angela Odell

Dear Sir

OUTLINE - ERECTION OF BUILDING FOR USE AS METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE AT TRAINING COLLEGE METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE, SHINFIELD PARK, SHINFIELD

Thank you for your letter dated 20 June 2000 which was received on 27 June 2000. You are asked to quote the following reference in any correspondence: **SU76NW/24/8**. The Environment Agency has the following comments:

The Environment Agency has no objection, in principle, to the proposed development provided that the following conditions are imposed on any planning permission granted:

PLANNING CONDITIONS

Drainage from covered car parking floors should not discharge to the surface water system. Where roof parking is proposed surface water should pass through an approved oil separator before connecting to the surface water system.

Roof water downpipes should be connected to the drainage system either directly, or by means of back inlet gullies provided with sealing plates instead of open gratings.

All sewage or trade effluent should be discharged to the foul sewer if available subject to the approval of Thames Water Utilities or its sewerage agent.

Any open chemical or refuse storage areas should be surrounded by suitable liquid tight bunded compounds to prevent drainage from these areas discharging into the surface water system. Such areas should be connected to the foul sewer subject to the approval of Thames Water Utilities or its sewerage agent.

Conservation: Contact Liz Baldwin on 01276 45 4430

Essential tree felling, branch removal and scrub clearance should avoid the bird nesting season. Planting should consist of locally native species only.

DECISION NOTICE

Would you please forward a copy of the decision notice to this office quoting our reference.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact myself on 01276 454 323 quoting the reference cited at the beginning of this letter.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Paxman
Development Planning Officer

Met Office Relocation, Shinfield
Development Control Comments

Parkman have been commissioned by Wokingham District Council to consider Development Control issues relating to the above development proposal. Our investigation considers Revision 1 of the WSP Transport Assessment report published on 6 June 2000.

The following comments are made for consideration by WDC Development Control Officers for initial discussion purposes:

1. In the event that approval is given a planning condition could be set to limit start/finish times of courses to periods outside traditional peak hours.
2. Shinfield Park has a surplus of car parking space, given the establishment of existing parking leases this may provide more spaces than the proposed 750 total quoted. The met office will need to provide assurances that they will not own or control more than 750 car parking spaces within a walk in catchment (including Shinfield Park). As the surplus is within walking distance the Met-office may potentially save money (from a decked car park) if they were to purchase some of the existing spaces from Foster Wheeler – saving environmental impact.
3. The lodge is used for meetings and therefore has some B1 use. This might be included in the overall Gross Floor Area (GFA).
4. There is some evidence of peak spreading, traffic travelling in adjacent time periods. We feel that a 2 hour peak profile in ¼ hour intervals should be provided so that the junction analysis can be correctly modelled. This could be based on the peak profile contained in Appendix M but shows that more information before 7:30 am would be necessary.
5. The distribution of traffic from the college was monitored on different days to those when delegate numbers are provided in table 2. This should be provided to insure that data is consistent.
6. Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's) in Appendix D are much higher than the 5% assumption made in paragraph 3.21. This should be increased to reflect at least a 10% proportion.
7. The Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) data in the adjacent area has shown a drop of 300 in the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) flow. Some of this can be explained by localised changes in employment and land uses. Whilst this pattern provides some record of trip suppression (journeys no longer being taken or changed to another mode) this may not be sustained for a long period.
8. We have no concerns on the existing safety record although the current level is marginally higher than might have been expected.
9. Table 6, summarising bus services, is incorrect. The number 1 service operates closer to a frequency of 20 minutes, the number 7 service does not leave Whitley and the 190/191/192/193 service from Bracknell travels into

Reading via Cemetery Junction. Furthermore the 112 service is likely to be reduced or redirected due to limited demand.

10. The Foster Wheeler shuttle bus is well used, there is no account of reserve capacity or outline agreements to utilise this service.
11. The Park and Ride (P&R) sites do not contribute to reduce overall car demand but a bus service operating between the proposed Mereoak site P&R and Winnersh Triangle (via the site) could be useful. If Grazeley is approved by the planning inspector then combined bus services to Winnersh Triangle will make a positive contribution. Nevertheless, Loddon Bridge is near capacity and contributions toward its expansion will be necessary if this is to be a viable option.
12. Figure 13 shows the Grazeley development figures with no transport improvements implemented. Why is this option chosen over the other choices available? We would like to see a worst-case scenario shown.
13. The density of staff to GFA is around 1:20 for the proposed site. Firstly this may be taken as an average case but we would rather see a worst-case scenario. Secondly, when moving to a new office it would seem that the relocation has occurred due to fragmenting of staff offices. This tends to arise from a growth in employment numbers, this being the case we would assume that some growth in staff numbers will occur over time which may need to be taken account of.
14. The parking standard for the existing number of staff (750) represents 52% - similar to existing demand. Firstly, a Green Transport Plan would expect to reduce the current demand. Secondly, there appears to be no account of how this might be achieved – other than incentive payments?
15. The possible pelican/toucan crossing has not been modelled in the junction analysis. Whilst the software is designed for zebra crossings it is possible to use an occasional pedestrian demand to reflect a signal controlled crossing – for example 0.5 ped/min (1 call every 2 minutes).
16. The results from the employee questionnaire should have been to the nearest ¼ hour although we realise that the questionnaire has already been undertaken. This information should feed into the existing peak period (2 hour) profile perhaps using the car park arrival pattern.
17. It could be argued that the modal split by the college staff is more realistic given the location of the site compared to the Bracknell town centre site where staff are less likely to travel by car. The estimate of 55% (para 7.6) is perhaps more realistic as a current trend from which to approach modal shift.
18. We agree with the suggestion that the GTP should be co-ordinated with other employers – perhaps a partnership to provide a local car-sharing database.
19. If the modal share targets are to be achieved we would like to see a reduction of car parking spaces to the level of expected demand – Table 14 = 664 car parking spaces. We would also like to see if the modal share by train is likely using the same logit modal used by WSP for the housing development at Grazeley.
20. The development presents an opportunity to reduce the severance between Shinfield Road and Whitley. The introduction of a footway/cycleway along

part of the public footpath, along the southern boundary of the site, would improve access for the development and the surrounding area.

21. We support the level of cycle parking proposed, provided it is appropriately located. An effective GTP would also justify the use of the Building Research Establishment Engineering Assessment Method (BREEAM) Standards for changing facilities – our estimate being that at least 20-30 showers will be necessary (34% of 175, 10-15 minutes shower time).

22. The traveller costs for cars is estimated as being 35p/mile in Table 15. The Inland Revenue guidance for 1999-2000 rates was 25p/mile for a typical car (1501-2000cc) above 4000 miles. This casts some doubt over the assumptions derived from this information.

23. The bus services to Winnersh Triangle are not entirely clear. From the capital outlay we would assume that the vehicles used would be 35-40 seat single deck buses. If it were possible to complete a return journey between Winnersh Triangle and the site twice in the peak hour (very unlikely without bus priorities) then the maximum number of passengers accommodated would be around 140-160 seated and a large number standing. Firstly this would fall short of the potential train only users irrespective of those who might park & ride and secondly this would be unattractive to potential passengers – And makes no attempt to reduce network traffic.

24. The current occurrence of double-parking (14%) at Bracknell should not occur at the proposed site. We believe that a condition should be applied to penalise double-parking as part of a failure to achieve GTP targets. Within the planning agreement failure to meet the GTP targets should be the full funding of measures that Wokingham District Council believe necessary to achieve that target.

25. Paragraph 9.5 states that persons are dropped off in the car park, whilst this will occur it neither accounts for those staff that go on to park elsewhere nor those who drop off staff within walking range of the office. We would therefore suggest that this is not a robust test.

26. The queue back through the preceding junction, shown in Tables 22 and 23, is undesirable. Even with Option 2 this problem occurs. We feel that given the proposed traffic signal controlled junction at Cutbush Lane it would be more appropriate to provide traffic signal controlled junctions – this could provide pedestrian/cycle crossings, selected detection for buses and SCOOT gating to some traffic flows.

27. Shinfield Park (Shire Hall) is included in the TRICS database. Of the five weekday surveys an average trip rate of 1.408 per $100m^2$ GFA can be calculated. Applying this figure to the $43460m^2$ would reveal a traffic generation level of 612 vehicles arriving (1-way) in the peak hour. A significant increase over the 528 2-way trips estimated.

28. The volume of traffic between the site and Loddon Bridge is very high. Whilst we appreciate that the development has focused on solving congestion problems on the A327 this corridor should not be overlooked.

29. Traffic to Junction 11 from the development is likely to be very low. Whilst the Highways Agency is the controlling authority we would recommend a

cumulative impact approach be taken to all developments in the area now that improvement proposals are sufficiently advanced to estimate the increased traffic capacity available from the new junction.

30. If the new Met-office roundabout were constructed in isolation, as implied in the WSP report, the impact on the existing southern roundabout should be demonstrated. We therefore believe that the Met-office development could not go ahead until all funds are available.

The report written by WSP on behalf of the Met. Office is a step in the right direction but given the very serious congestion in the surrounding network there is a lot more to be done. The anticipated modal share is only a moderate shift from current trends and does not achieve the policies stated in the Planning Statement.

We have outlined a number of points that need to be addressed and a number of suggestions for Wokingham District Council and the Developer to consider. It is our opinion that an appropriate solution could be found but that the current proposals are inadequate.

Angela Odell

From: Chris Hamilton
Sent: 26 July 2000 10:16
To: Angela Odell
Subject: RE: Library contributions

Thanks Angela. Unless I'm misreading this, both developments are at Shinfield Park.

I can't imagine that the transfer of even 1400 Met Office staff from Bracknell to Shinfield Park will significantly increase Wokingham's resident population or the load on our library service. In addition, it seems fairly unlikely that a govt agency would be willing or able to make a voluntary contribution to WDC. If we can get anything, I would welcome cash for unspecified enhancements to the District's library service.

Much of this applies to the Foster Wheeler application. Although this is obviously private sector funded, the scale, nature and location of the development don't seem to justify any significant demand on our part. Again, an untied voluntary contribution would be very welcome.

As I said before, I would welcome the opportunity to talk directly to the developers at the appropriate time. That would allow us to gauge the potential and explore possibilities.

Chris

-----Original Message-----
From: **Angela Odell**
Sent: Monday, July 24, 2000 4:33 PM
To: Chris Hamilton
Subject: RE: Library contributions

dear Chris

Met. office is for relocation from Bracknell headquarters with an expected 1400 extra employees on the Shinfield Park site. They will be transfers from Bracknell. The site is on the west side of Shinfield Park, north of the M4 and south of Crosfields school and the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting.

Foster Wheeler expect an additional up to 450 employees. The site is the ex-BCC Offices just north of the M4.

I hope this is helpful information, but if you wish for anything further, please contact me.

Angela

-----Original Message-----
From: Chris Hamilton
Sent: 21 July 2000 16:54
To: Angela Odell
Subject: RE: Library contributions

Angela:

I've heard of the Met Office development but not the Foster Wheeler one. What is it and where?

Does either development increase the District's daytime population? If not, all we could do is look for voluntary contributions. If that is the way we're going, I would like some information on the scale and location of each development and the opportunity to discuss possibilities informally with the developers.

Many thanks

Chris

Chris Hamilton
Head of Libraries and Lifelong Learning
Wokingham District Council
Shute End
Wokingham, Berks RG40 1WN

Tel: 0118 974 6261

Fax: 0118 974 6135
Mobile: 08701 664382

-----Original Message-----
From: **Angela Odell**
Sent: Thursday, July 20, 2000 8:33 AM
To: Chris Hamilton
Subject: Library contributions

Dear Chris

Do you wish me to persue possible library contributions for:
Application O/2000/1714 - Met. Office, and
Application F/2000/1799 - Foster Wheeler.

If so for what/how much?

Thanks

Angela ext.6445

SAI BRIEFING NOTE

Proposed relocation of the Meteorological Office to Shinfield Park, Shinfield

The Meteorological Office is consulting WDC regarding its proposed development under arrangements used by government departments under Circular 18/84.

The proposal is for a 33,351 m² 3 storey office/computer/ancillary teaching building, a decked car park with 750 spaces, a social building (including creche) and an accommodation block for students. About 1,500 staff are expected (nearly all transferred from Bracknell). All existing buildings on the site would be demolished except the Grade II Listed Lodge. The main access would be directly onto the existing roundabout on Shinfield Road. A Green Transport Plan is proposed, including a shuttle bus service to Winnersh Triangle Station to collect staff, many of whom currently live in Bracknell and Wokingham. A contribution is also proposed to highway improvements in the local area, which may include re-modelling the roundabout and the WDC scheme for proposed road improvements to the B3270.

It should be noted that as the application is a consultation under circ. 18/84, a section 106 is not applicable. However, Colin Lawley thinks some means may be possible under the Local Government Act.

Angela Odell
19.6.00

need to check highways
Cox Improving P+R.

Contribution to Affordable Housing

IT equipment in local schools? ? Shinfield & Lower Earley.

Library contribs

public access?

woodland management

Lower Earley - relocation of Shinfield playgrn.

creche.

Library books.

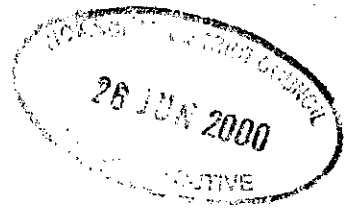
Air quality

THE RT. HON. JOHN REDWOOD, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

→ Angela O'dell.

23 June 2000



Ms Jane Earl
Chief Executive
Wokingham District Council
P O Box 150
Shute End
Wokingham
Berks RG40 1WQ

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT 31283
POL	TLS
DC	ENF
APP	
CS AMO	
03 JUL 2000	
COPIES TO:	ACK:
	FILE:

Dear Jane

Thank you for your letter concerning the proposal to relocate the Met Office in Wokingham. I have not yet received representations on this proposal. I suggest the Council take soundings on how many Met Office staff currently live in the Wokingham District and would like it to stay in this area, and give proper attention to the traffic problems the site could generate.

Yours sincerely

Kate Swaffield / Angela Odell fyi.

Email: redwoodj@parliament.uk

Tel. 0118 9746003 (Direct Line)

Fax. 0118 9790877

Email. Jane.Earl@wokingham.gov.uk

Date. 29 June, 2000

My ref. CE/hkg/

Your ref.

Chief Executive's Office
P.O. Box 150
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WQ
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 979 0877
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Ms Jane Griffiths MP
10 Church Street
READING
RG1 2SD

Dear Jane

MET OFFICE PROPOSED RELOCATION

We have recently been approached by the Met Office about the possibility of them relocating from their existing site in Bracknell to a site in Wokingham. They are also in discussion with Bracknell Forest Council about a potential other site in Bracknell.

I attach a background briefing sheet on the topic which gives you some idea of the scale of the development and the likely issues which it raises.

The Council has not sought to encourage the Met Office to relocate into Wokingham, but the possibility clearly throws up some benefits in terms of existing centres of excellence which are already within the district, including the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting and the Met College, as well as the extensive links which exist with the University.

We will be taking soundings with our local members on the issue, but I thought it was helpful to let you have some background at this stage in case you wish to express any views. The application has not yet had any public debate within Wokingham's formal structures so any comments which you might have would be most appropriate directed to me at this stage.

With very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Jane Earl
Chief Executive

Enc.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE 28.6.00 – APPLICATION O/2000/1714 – PROPOSED RELOCATION OF MET. OFFICE TO SHINFIELD PARK

Notes of comments/concerns /questions voiced by members

Members were generally supportive of the proposal and recognised the importance of the Met. Office.

Traffic
The main concern was the expected significant exacerbation of traffic congestion problems on the A327 Shinfield Road and B3270, which would get worse anyway with consented developments nearby in the pipeline. Significant financial contribution needed to local road improvements (one member suggested that the southern Blackboy roundabout should be graded separated to allow the A327 to go straight through). Also existing congestion problems at junction 11 of the M4 and the Winnersh Triangle exit of the A329M are likely to be exacerbated.
Who owns the land between the A327 and Foster Wheeler? (was B.C.C. land)
How many staff are on the site at a time?

Parking – Concern was expressed at the 750 parking spaces proposed and that such a high number compared with the much lower number at the London Road premises would encourage more commuting in by car.

Buses – Need looking at.

Trains – Need to see if can get SW Trains to stop the trains at Winnersh Triangle station more frequently than once per half hour.

Cycleways – Need to look at, and in particular bringing forward the proposed cycleway on the rest of Lower Earley Way.

Other points
Housing - London Road site – Need to ensure redeveloped for housing.

Hillside School – Problem of weather centre staff's children not speaking English as a first language. (I understand from Graham Cooper that these are children of the ECMWF staff, and therefore this point is not expected to be exacerbated if the Met. Office moves to Shinfield Park.) Also pressure on educational facilities

Health – Any known health problems associated with the Met. Office? (This raised as the Met. Office has a lot of equipment, including transmitting and receiving devices – prompted by health concerns associated with mobile phone masts.)

Visual impact of building – will be prominent

Beaufort Park site – A member noted this site is outside a settlement boundary.

AO – 29/6/00

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT 32276
POL	TLS
DC	ENF
APP	
CS	
26 JUL 2000	
COPIES TO:	ACK:
	FILE:

The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership-Reading
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot,
Reading. RG31 7BW
Tel 0118 943 0000 Fax 0118 943 0002
e-mail: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

FACSIMILE

Barton Willmore
Planning

To: **Angela O'dell**

From: **Bill Dawes**

Company: **Wokingham District Council Planning Department**

Date: **25/07/00**

Fax No: **0118 974 6484**

Job No: **9906**

Number of pages (including this page): **2**

Message

MET. OFFICE, SHINFIELD PARK

IN ADVANCE OF TOMORROW'S MEETING PLEASE SEE ATTACHED SCHEDULE OF LEASEHOLD BUILDINGS IN BRACKNELL WITH FLOOR AREAS AND APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES.

THE MET OFFICE HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX COMPRISES A FREEHOLD SITE OF SOME 1.78 HECTARES (4.4 ACRES) ACCOMMODATING 21,088 SQ.M. (227,000 SQ.FT.) (GROSS EXTERNAL FLOOR AREA) OF MULTI-STOREY OFFICE ACCOMMODATION ARRANGED IN FOUR INTERCONNECTING WINGS AROUND A CENTRAL GRASSED QUADRANGLE. THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN 895.

WE HAVE BEEN INFORMALLY DISCUSSING A PLANNING BRIEF WITH BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH BASED ON A MIXED USE REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME FOR THE LONDON ROAD SITE. OPTIONS SO FAR PUT TO THEM INCLUDE 9,000 SQ.M. OF 3, 4 AND 5 STOREY OFFICES TOGETHER WITH 60 RESIDENTIAL UNITS GIVING A PLOT RATIO OF 0.8, AND AN ALTERNATIVE SCHEME OF 3 AND 5 STOREY OFFICES OF 10,000 SQ.M. TOGETHER WITH 70 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AT A PLOT RATIO OF 0.9.

BILL DAWES

File Note 9906/A1 - The Met. Office

1. Johnson House, London Road, Bracknell

   Gross floor area 818 sq. metres
   Approx no. of employees 64

2. Sutton House, London Road, Bracknell

   Gross floor area 1471 sq. metres
   Approx no. of employees 117

3. Hadley Building, London Road, Bracknell

   Gross floor area 1426 sq. metres
   Approx no. of employees 116

4. Powell Duffryn House, London Road, Bracknell

   Gross floor area 754 sq. metres
   Approx no. of employees 72

5. The Western Centro, Western Road, Bracknell

   Gross floor area 2264 sq. metres
   (warehouse and office accommodation)

6. Scott Archive Building, Eastern Road, Bracknell

   Gross floor area 2356 sq. metres
   Approx no. of employees 7

(c) Part 11 (development under local or private acts or orders);
(d) Part B of Part 12 (development comprising deposit of waste material by a local authority);
(e) Class F(a) of Part 17 (development by public gas suppliers);
(f) Class A of Part 20 (development by licensees of the Coal Authority);
(g) Class B of Part 20 (development by licensees of the British Coal Corporation); and
(h) Class B of Part 21 (deposit of mining waste).

Development is also excluded if it consists of the carrying out by a drainage body[1] of improvement works within the meaning of the Land Drainage Improvement Works (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988.[2]

152. Development permitted under Class A(a) and (b) of Part 11 is excluded by virtue of Article 1.5 of the Directive, which states that the Directive shall not apply to projects the details of which are adopted by a specific act of national legislation. As an exemption this is, under Community law, to be construed narrowly. Accordingly, development of a nature or in a location that was not specifically designated in the relevant Act or order (see Part 11, Class A) are subject to the procedures in paragraphs 61–65. New Private Acts of Parliament which would benefit from Part 11 permitted development rights are subject to EIA procedures by Parliamentary Standing Order 27A.

153. Development permitted under Part 7, Class A(c) of Part 11, Part 14 and Class F(a) of Part 17 is the subject of alternative consent procedures to which separate Regulations apply. Development permitted under Class D of Part 8, Class B of Part 12, Classes A and B of Part 20 and Class B of Part 21 excluded as it concerns projects begun on or before July 1, 1948, before the date on which the Directive came into operation.

154. Projects begun before March 14, 1999 are also excluded, if they comprise development:

(a) under Class C or Class D of Part 20 on the same authorised site as development begun under the same Class before that date;
(b) under Class A of Part 21 on the same premises or the same ancillary mining land as the premises or land on which development under the same Class was begun before that date; and
(c) under Class B of Part 22 on the same land or on land adjoining land on which development under the same Class was begun before that date.

155. Development which comprises or forms part of a project serving national defence purposes is excluded by virtue of Article 1.4 of the Directive (see the definition of "exempt development" in regulation 2(1)).

156. For all other Parts not covered by specific exclusions the provisions of paragraph (10) of article 3 of the GPDO will not apply to the completion of development begun before March 14, 1999. Development carried out under permitted development rights and consisting of building operations or engineering operations will be excluded from the new provisions where such operations are already underway under permitted development rights at the time of these Regulations coming into force.

Crown development

157. Like the Town and Country Planning Act, the Regulations do not bind the Crown. Developments by Crown bodies which would require planning permission if they were proposed by any other person and which require EIA under the terms of the Regulations are likely to be uncommon in **4–1973**

[1] Section 72(1) of the Land Drainage Act 1991.
[2] S.I. 1998 No. 1217.

England. When any such development is proposed, the Crown body concerned will submit an Environmental Statement to the local planning authority when consulting them under the arrangements set out in Part IV of the Memorandum to Circular 18/84. In addition, the Ministry of Defence will, in appropriate circumstances and subject to considerations affecting national security, provide Environmental Statements in respect of major defence projects. Proposals have been published for the removal of Crown exemption in planning matters. Pending the necessary legislation, the arrangements in Circular 18/84 continue to apply.

Financial and manpower implications

4–1974 158. Developers who are required to prepare Environmental Statements will incur some additional costs in doing so. However, in most cases much of the information in the Statement would be likely to be provided in support of the planning application, particularly if the proposal is one which under existing planning procedures would go to public inquiry. In deciding on the extent of the information required to be submitted, planning authorities' aim should be to keep the costs imposed on developers to the minimum consistent with compliance with the Regulations.

159. The implications for local planning authorities will vary from authority to authority according to the incidence of environmentally significant development projects. There will be a small amount of additional work involved in deciding on the need for EIA particularly in Schedule 2 cases. However, in general it is expected that this will form part of normal pre-application consultations between the developer and the authority. Where an Environmental Statement is submitted, the systematic analysis of the project's effects should result in administrative savings in considering the application, and the possibility of an earlier decision. There may be additional costs for planning authorities where consultants have to be engaged to advise on the appraisal of highly technical or specialist evidence. Such cases should be exceptional.

ANNEX A

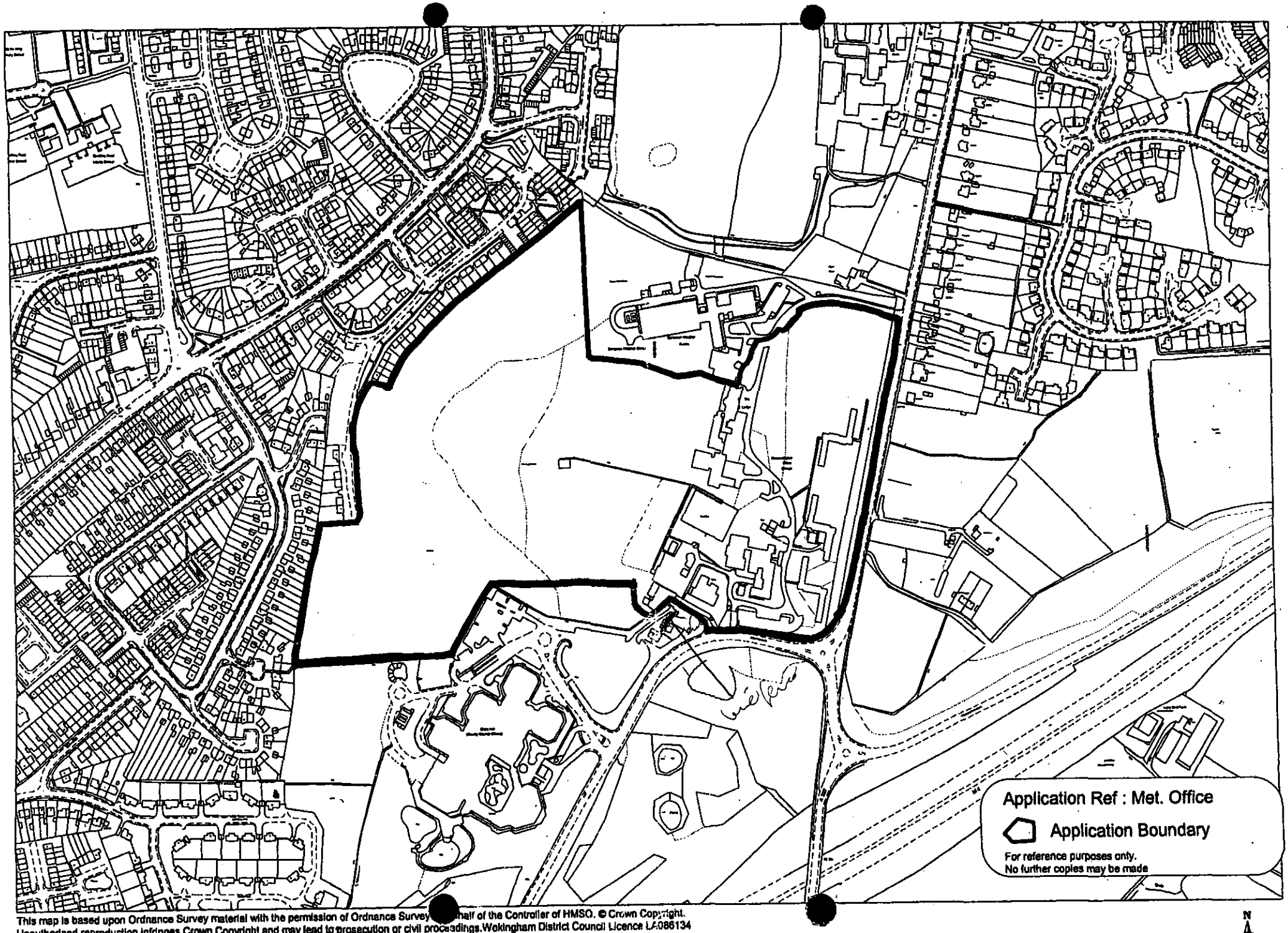
INDICATIVE THRESHOLDS AND CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF SCHEDULE 2 DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING EIA

4–1975 The criteria and thresholds in this Annex (referred to in paragraphs 43–44) are only indicative. In determining whether significant effects are likely, the location of a development is of crucial importance. The more environmentally sensitive the location, the lower will be the threshold at which significant effects will be likely.

If follows, therefore that the thresholds below should only be used in conjunction with the more general guidance in this Circular on "Establishing whether EIA is required" and, in particular, the guidance on environmentally sensitive locations (paragraphs 36–40).

Agricultural development

4–1976 A1. In general, agricultural operations fall outside the scope of the Town and Country Planning system and, where relevant, will be regulated under other consent procedures. The descriptions below apply only to projects that are considered to be "development" for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

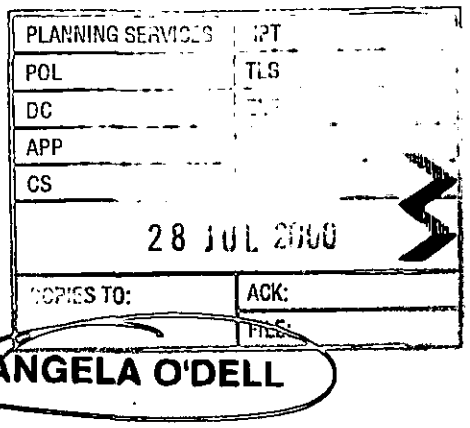


This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.Wokingham District Council Licence LA086134

Development Control Section, Environmental Services, Wokingham District Council.

N
W E

The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership-Reading
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot,
Reading. RG31 7BW
Tel 0118 943 0000 Fax 0118 943 0002
e-mail: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk



FACSIMILE

Barton Willmore
Planning

To: **ANGELA O'DELL**

From: **BILL DAWES**

Company: **WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

Date: **27/07/00**

Fax No: **0118 974 6484**

Job No: **9906**

Number of pages (including this page): **1**

Message

MET OFFICE, SHINFIELD PARK

Thank you for a copy of the meeting notes. My only planning comment is in relation to Health. The sentence should I believe read:-

"The only antennae on site will be receiving and not transmitting".

Regards

Bill Dawes

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: Bill Dawes

FROM: Angela Odell.

DESTINATION FAX No: 943 0002

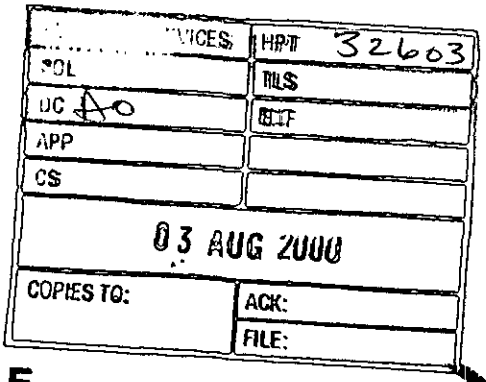
DATE: 1.8.00

TIME: am

SUBJECT: Met. Pk Sheffield Pk.

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES (Inc. this cover sheet): 3

Environmental Services Department, P.O Box 157, Civic Offices, Shute End,
Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1WR. Tel (0118) 9746428. Fax (0118) 9746484.



The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership-Reading
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot,
Reading. RG31 7BW
Tel 0118 943 0000 Fax 0118 943 0002
e-mail: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

FACSIMILE

Barton Willmore
Planning

To: ANGELA O'DELL

From: BILL DAWES

Company: WOKINGHAM D C PLANNING

Date: 2 AUGUST '00

Fax No: 0118 9746484

Job No: 3906

Number of pages (including this page): 3

Message

RE MET OFFICE SHINFIELD PART 1

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED COMMENTS FROM OUR LANDSCAPE GROUP AS MENTIONED AT LAST WEEK'S MEETING. THEY MAY BE OF SOME USE

I AM TRYING TO ARRANGE FOR A LONG SECTION FROM THE MOTORWAY JUNCTION TO THE SITE (AGAIN AS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING) TO BE DRAWN UP

Bill Dawes

Barton Willmore Environmental
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot
Reading, RG31 7BW.
Tel 0118 943 0000 Fax 0118 943 0001
e-mail: environmental@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

MEMORANDUM

Barton Willmore
Environmental

9906/A1/MDC.SEJ

26 July 2000

TO: **IAN TANT : BARTON WILLMORE PLANNING**
FROM: **MATTHEW CHARD : BARTON WILLMORE ENVIRONMENTAL**

MET OFFICE, SHINFIELD PARK

In response to Catherine Brimble's (the Landscape Architect at Wokingham District Council) landscape comments dated 18 July 2000 on our proposal for the relocation of the Met Office at Shinfield Park, my comments are as follows.

The proposals shown are indicative only and illustrate that 359,000 sq. ft. of office space plus 750 car parking spaces can be accommodated on the site. This is a consultation submission and therefore the layout and forms illustrated on the plans are not necessarily the final scheme.

We agree that the site is located on a prominent point on top of a ridgeline, however the proposed building would not be visually prominent due to the screening provided by surrounding features, including the existing Foster Wheeler building to the south, the European Weather Centre to the north and dense, mature woodland and tree belts to the south, east and west. In addition, it is proposed that the new building comprises three storeys which would be some 15 metres high, that is 15 metres lower, or half the height of the existing Foster Wheeler building.

A courtyard area has been proposed within the building due to the layout of the facilities required by the Met Office. It was a requirement of the brief that these facilities be linked. The only way in which this could be achieved was by providing a pavilion layout, otherwise a larger or 'L' shaped building would have to be provided on the site and this would have resulted in substantial adverse landscape impacts.

With regard to CB's suggestion that the proposals do not take account of the landscape as a whole, due to the lack of integration of the car park and the building into the existing landscape setting, it should be noted that the layout as proposed achieves the following landscape objectives:-

- The protection of as many existing mature and veteran trees on the site as possible.
- The protection of all Ancient Woodland on the site.

- The retention of the majority of other woodlands and tree belts.
- Retains as far as possible the amenity value of the "parkland" setting, whilst accommodating the necessary quantum of development.
- The protection of species-rich, semi-improved amenity grassland in the "parkland".

In response to comments on the position of the car park, it has not been arbitrarily placed on the site. The proposed car park, which needs to accommodate 750 car parking spaces, allows for the protection of as many mature trees on the site as possible, and existing woodland areas. In addition, it does not encroach into the main 'parkland' area or impinge on the important vista from the listed building, The Lodge.

With regard to the removal of the existing significant tree belt along Shinfield Road, only a small part of the southern section of the tree belt would need to be removed. It is agreed that views from the Shinfield Road/Whitley Wood Lane junction would be "opened up". However, the mitigation measures, which would comprise woodland mix/buffer planting, as stated in paragraph 5.10 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal Report, would provide some screening in the longer term. This planting would provide a "buffer" to views into the site when approaching the junction of Whitley Wood Lane and Shinfield Road.

I trust that above is satisfactory. However, if you have any queries or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

MATTHEW CHARD

See part 1 plans

PLANNING SERVICES	HPT
POL	TLS
DC	ENF
APP	
CS	
07 AUG 2000	
COPIES TO:	ACK:
	FILE:

Public Rights Of Way Officer
F A O Graham Barnwell

~~From~~ TO: Angela Odell

Date: 20 June 2000

Application Number: O/2000/1714

Proposal: Outline application for the proposed erection of building for use as meteorological office..

Site Address:
Training College Meteorological Office, Shinfield Park, Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading.

Applicant:
Ministry Of Defence C/O Barton Wilmore Planning.

Your observations are required in respect of this application within **7 days** of the above date.

No objection to this application

G Boswell

3-8-2000

To insert after 6.16?

Regarding the comments of the JSPU in relation to other possible alternative sites, the consultants have advised that a suitable relocation site for the Met. Office requires a site which can accommodate the amount of office floorspace proposed (together with the ancillary residential and social accommodation) which must also be secure (due to the Met. Office's inclusion within the MoD) and immediately available. To the knowledge of Bracknell Forest B C no other site which meets the above requirements is available in Bracknell. The availability of sites in the context of the 'Planning Commitments for Employment Uses Survey' undertaken in March 1999 for the main Berkshire towns of Reading, Bracknell, Wokingham and Maidenhead was also examined, but found to contain no alternative site which would readily meet all of the Met. Office's identified criteria.

To inset after 6.16?
Regarding the comments of the JSPU in relation to other possible alternative sites, the consultants have advised that they have not been able to identify any alternative sites that would meet all the Met. Office's requirements, and the Council is not aware of any such sites either.

P.S. Liz says she thinks there might be a suitable site in Camberley, but I presume we don't want to know!

PLANNING SERVICES | HPT 32558
POL | TLS
DC AO | ENF
APP |
CS |
02 AUG 2000
COPIES TO: | ACK:
FILE:

The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership - Reading
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot,
Reading, RG31 7BW.
Tel 0118 943 0000 Fax 0118 943 0002
e-mail: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

Barton Willmore
Planning

For the Attention of Mrs A Odell
The Director of Environmental Services
Wokingham District Council
PO Box 157
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR

By Post and by Fax 0118 974 6484

9906/A3/WD/GJC
1 August 2000

Dear Madam

SHINFIELD PARK, THE MET OFFICE TRAINING COLLEGE
PLANNING CONSULTATION NO. 0/02000/1714

We thank you for an opportunity to view the draft letter from the Joint Strategic Planning Unit (JSPU) with regard to the proposed Met Office relocation to Shinfield Park.

We acknowledge the comments made in the letter and have passed a copy to WSP in case they wish to respond to the transport issues highlighted. We would wish to respond to one matter, that of the reference to location by the JSPU.

The Shinfield Park site is within an urban area and the consideration and availability of any other sites by the Met Office must in terms of the sequential approach be limited to those sites which are either town centre or edge of town centre. The suitability of other urban area site should not in our opinion need to be explored. since they are no better related in the sequence than the application sites.

Although, the sequential test has not been explicitly stated in the accompanying planning statement to the Consultation, the Met Office were faced in their search for a suitable relocation site with a number of unique requirements which have severely limited the choice of alternative locations. Such factors may be summarised as the need for a site to accommodate up to 37160 sq metres (400,000 sq ft) of office accommodation, residential staff accommodation, a social facilities building and surface car parking. Importantly by the nature of the Met Office's activities and its inclusion within the Ministry of Defence the site must be totally secure. Further the requirement to be operational by the end of 2002 has realistically limited the search to employment sites that are immediately identified and available.

Certificate No. FS 29637

Town Planners • Environmental Consultants
Architects • Master Planners • Project Services

Contact: Gareth Capner, Ian Tant, Roger Turnbull, Mark Sitch

A list of partners can be inspected here and at our associated offices in:
Bristol Cambridge Edinburgh Leeds London West Malling (Kent)

We can advise you that at an earlier meeting with Officers of Bracknell Forest Borough Council in April of this year regarding the Met Office relocation, it was confirmed that to their knowledge there were no other suitable sites available in the Borough to meet the Met Office requirements. The Staff College Site at Broad Lane Bracknell is intended for housing development, and a vacant site at Amen Corner (Western Avenue) was understood to have recently been acquired by a large local employer. In any event, neither site is town centre or edge of town centre and there is no reason to favour them in terms of sequence over Shinfield park.

With regard to the Berkshire towns of Reading, Bracknell, Wokingham and Maidenhead we have considered the availability of sites in the context of the "Planning Commitments for Employment Uses Survey" undertaken March 1999 for each of these towns. Camberley was not considered since it is outside Berkshire and would not therefore have maintained the association with an existing Berkshire firm from a study of the documentation. We could not find a suitable site in the various listings which would readily meet all of the Met Office's identified criteria.

The Met Office has yet to decide on its intended relocation, which may in principle be anywhere in the United Kingdom. The consultation process under the relevant Circular with regard to both Shinfield Park and Beaufort Park is intended to establish at an early stage whether in principle there would be support or objection from the respective Local Authorities to such a relocation.

We trust the above comments are of assistance to you.

Yours faithfully

W R Dawes

W R DAWES
Senior Planner

PLANNING SERVICES | RPT 32817
POL | TLS
DC | ENF
APP |
CS |
09 AUG 2000
COPIES TO: | ACK:
FILE:

The Barton Willmore Planning Partnership-Reading
Beansheaf Farmhouse, Bourne Close, Calcot,
Reading, RG31 7BW
Tel 0118 943 0000 Fax 0118 943 0002
e-mail: planning@reading.bartonwillmore.co.uk

FACSIMILE

Barton Willmore
Planning

To: **Angela O'dell** From: **Bill Dawes**

Company: **Wokingham D.C. Planning** Date: **08/08/00**

Fax No: **0118 974 6484** Job No: **9906**

Number of pages (including this page): **1**

Message

MET OFFICE, SHINFIELD PARK

Further to your fax dated 3rd August 2000 the answers to the unanswered questions are as follows:

Question 3: *These are two former caretakers' bungalows which are presently unoccupied,* but have the potential for future short term occupation (for example for temporary student accommodation) if required.

Question 4: Yes, in principle. The Met Office are likely to have a private company run the crèche with first priority to their own staff. If there is spare capacity then other local employees could be invited to use the facilities.

Bill Dawes

Met. Office – Shinfield Park

John/Colin
Paras. 6.02 – 6.04 I am unsure how to word in 2 ways:

1. It is not a planning application and therefore would the standard wording of the conditions be correct?
2. Under Circ. 18/84 do we forward obs. And the obs. And objections of third parties to the Met. Office and then they have to forward them to the SoS for the Environment?
3. Is para. 229a of Section 106 correct for legal agreement?

John
Delete paras. 6.26-6.28? These are possibly unnecessary.
I have now put the JSPU letter as an appendix and deleted all the detail under 'Consultations'? I have also included rebuttal text to their 'sequential' comments after paras. 6.16 and 6.31.

Tom
To check all references to transport: (Paras.6.02, 6.03 (conditions 1, 3 &4), 6.12, 6.19 (Shinfield P.C., Earley T.C., JSPU [transport], 6.20 [C], 6.32-6.38, 6.51 & 6.54.

Neil
To check references to trees: 6.04, 6.19 (*tree officer*), 6.44 & 6.56

Harold
To check references to Listed Building: 6.04, 6.19 (*English Heritage & Conservation Officer*),6.43 & 6.56.

Liz Gibbons
To check all parts of report referring to policy.

If you have any comments please give them either to John before he goes no holiday on 18 August, or to Mike Thorp for Agenda Planning at 9.30 on Friday 25 August

Close co-operation between these bodies will be helpful in developing training strategies for the local workforce and strategies for increasing the capacity of local communities to achieve the regeneration of their areas.

POLICY RE7

In order to address strategic spatial inequalities around the region, particular attention should also be given to actively supporting economic regeneration and renewal in Priority Areas for Economic Regeneration (PAERs).

Development plans should:

- **contain integrated policies for transport, housing, employment and educational facilities, which will tackle the identified economic weaknesses of the PAERs and are consistent with local economic development and regeneration strategies;**
- **review the amount and type of employment land available in the light of local employment needs;**
- **identify strategic sites for commercial development with the potential for good transport access, including links with small airports;**
- **review existing employment sites and consider whether any upgrading or improvement is required to meet the needs of the type of business that is needed in the area; and**
- **ensure full advantage is taken of economic strengths and opportunities in the area including transport links, local knowledge and skills and existing and potential business clusters.**

7.12 Regional Development Agencies, local authorities, Learning and Skills Councils and other regional partners all have an interest in working together on regeneration strategies for individual PAERs. These will help assist the local workforce to gain the skills needed by existing and potential employers. Furthermore local partnerships can increase the community capacity to achieve regeneration.

POLICY RE8

In the Western Arc positive strategies should be developed for areas where congestion or labour or land shortages are constraining economic growth. "Hotspots" should be identified and specific policies developed to tackle local problems.

Development plans should:

- **ensure that the best use is made of employment land to maximise the performance of the economy as a whole, facilitating changes of use of land where appropriate and ensuring that land allocations and development policies are consistent with local economic development strategies; and**

- **include policies and proposals which result from a review of existing and potential sites considering various factors including:**
  - **a) current use and scope for intensification**
  - **b) scope for optimising the use of previously developed land**
  - **c) scope for mixing employment uses with other land uses such as housing and education**
  - **d) availability of land within built up urban areas**
  - **e) potential for increasing access by sustainable transport modes**
  - **f) marketability**

7.9 Regional Development Agencies, economic partnerships, businesses and others need to have regard to this guidance in developing strategies for growing indigenous businesses and targeting suitable inward investment. It is important for business interests to appraise local authorities of changing spatial requirements of business and to seek innovative solutions jointly.

Economic Distribution in the Region

7.10 Overall the South East has a buoyant and successful economy. However, parts of the Region do not show the same sustained economic progress as others and stand in need of further development. This section distinguishes the approaches to economic development which are relevant to the different parts of the Region identified in the Core Strategy in chapter 4 of this guidance.

POLICY RE6

Special priority should be given to securing economic development in the Thames Gateway in accordance with RPG 9a.

Development plans should:

- **continue to pursue the implementation of proposals identified in RPG9a with emphasis on ensuring good design combined with efficient use of land, integration of transport and land use, and mixed use development wherever possible;**
- **identify additional opportunities for employment uses, with the potential for integration with good transport access, housing and services while enhancing the natural environment; and**
- **maximise opportunities for improving access within the Thames Gateway, particularly by non-car modes, with close co-operation between adjoining authorities.**

7.11 The Regional and the London Development Agencies, together with local authorities, private interests and other key partners, will be able to reflect the regional and national priority of the Thames Gateway in their implementation and investment strategies. Comprehensive marketing and redevelopment strategies involving an ongoing dialogue with potential developers are important elements for the success of the Thames Gateway.

JR → Aug.
for info.

The Met.Office

Chief Executive
Peter Ewins MSc FEng FRAeS

London Road Bracknell Berkshire RG12 2SZ
Switchboard: +44 (0)1344 420242

Tel: +44 (0)1344 854600
Fax: +44 (0)1344 854400
e-mail: pdewins@meto.gov.uk

D/CE/1/1 (203/00)

21 July 2000

Mrs K Satterford
Director of Environmental Services
Wokingham District Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1WR

Dear Ms Satterford,

I have great pleasure in enclosing a copy of The Met Office's Annual Report and Accounts for 1999/2000. Its emphasis is on putting the customer first.

By any measure, 1999/2000 has been a successful year. We well exceeded our targets for weather forecasting accuracy, making the largest one-year leap in the global numerical weather prediction index since it was introduced 10 years ago. This confirms our position as second to none in the world for accuracy and reinforces our position as Europe's leading meteorological service.

Equally importantly, we have also improved overall quality and efficiency, making our products and services more accessible, more affordable and more relevant to our customers' needs. Our customer centre is now fully operational ('phone 0845 300 0 300), enabling us to respond rapidly to the needs of all our customers - individuals, the public sector, commerce and industry - 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

At the same time, we successfully achieved the Investors in People standard, demonstrating our commitment to our staff and to their further development and training. Only with experienced and skilled staff, together with the dedication they have always shown, can we meet our customer's expectations.

For the future, we are embarking on a major 5 year investment programme aimed at further improving the quality and affordability of our services, expanding their range to include related aspects of the natural environment, and ensuring that we remain the supplier of choice for weather related services in the UK and, increasingly, in Europe and the rest of the world.

I hope you enjoy looking through our Annual Report, and that you will pass it on to colleagues who have an interest in The Met Office and the services we provide.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Ewins

2526 — 3767 #714

Yellow

Tel: (0118) 974 6478 (Direct Line)
Fax: (0118) 974 6486
Email: diane.mcgloin@wokingham.gov.uk

0/1714

Date: 20 April 2001
My ref: dm/eig/Met Office Appn. File please
Your ref:

Mr Mike Straw
Weatherall Green and Smith Ltd
22 Chancery Lane
LONDON
WC2A 1LT

BY FAX

Environmental Services Department
Planning Services
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR
Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Fax: (0118) 974 6385
Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991
DX: 33506 – Wokingham

Dear Mr Straw

MET OFFICE SITE, SHINFIELD, READING

I write further to your discussions with Anna Cronin and our telephone conversation of yesterday.

The policy and plans team have drawn up this fact sheet in order to respond to the many enquiries about the site. I understand it rehearses most of the points raised at your meeting with the exception of mixed development and the Shinfield Players Theatre.

Yours sincerely

Diane McGloin
Technical Support, Policy and Plans