

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Application Number:	251188
Site Address:	398 Reading Road, Winnersh, Wokingham, RG41 5EP
Expiry Date:	12 August 2025
Site Visit Date:	26 June 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of the building to a café/restaurant/bar.	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP15 – Employment Development
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk TB20 – Service Arrangements and Deliveries for Employment and Retail Use
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	NA
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements SS8 – Meeting our employment needs CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE2 – Environmental standards for non-residential development CE4 – Supporting a circular economy C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) DH1 – Place making and quality design HC8 – Noise pollution

Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document
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Application Number	Proposal	Decision Date	Decision	Relevant Conditions
242914	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed change of use of the building to a café/restaurant/cocktail bar.	21/01/2025	Refused	NA
090495	Application to extend implementation date of Planning Consent F/2007/1272 for a further 3 years for the demolition of existing petrol station and canopy and removal of fuel tanks (underground) and the erection of 12 flats and a building for A1,A2, B1 and D1 use.	23/02/2010	Approved	None
070878	Proposed Demolition of existing petrol station and canopy, removal of fuel tanks (underground) and the erection of new mixed use accommodation comprising of (12 flats and building for A1, A2, B1 and D1 Use).	16/01/2008	Approved	None
97/65725/A	Proposed erection of internally illuminated goal post sign.	25/07/1997	Approved	None
96/64302/A	Proposed erection of illuminated canopy.	04/10/1996	Approve	None
960505 96/64374/F	Proposed Alterations To Sales Building Including Hot Food Servery And A.T.M (Amendment Of Consent No.95/63173/f).	23/10/1996	Approved	None
961000 96/64266/F	Proposed Alteration To Forecourt Canopy.	20/09/1996	Approved	None
96/63982/A	Proposed erection of illuminated canopy fascia.	06/08/1996	Approved	None
950235	Proposed Change Of Use Of Part Of Service Station To Hot Food Take Away (A3). Proposed Extension To provide storeroom and staff area.	30/04/1996	Approved	None
44871	Proposed single storey extension to garage to form enclosed sales area.	22/09/1995	Approved	None

38743	Installation of 8 no double skinned underground fuel storage tanks.	30/01/1992	Approved	None
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CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received.
WBC Highways – No objection.
WBC Licensing – No comments received.
WBC CIL – No comments received.
WBC Waste Services – No comments received.

External

None.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Objection to the later proposed operational hours.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	No comments received.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site comprises 0.13 ha of commercial land on the southern side of Reading Road. The site consists of a car wash and café.

The application site is located on the corner of a busy crossroads where Reading Road intersects King Street Lane and Robin Hood Lane. Reading Road is classified as a Green Route Enhancement Area. The site is accessed via two entrances, off King Street Lane and one off Reading Road.

Proposal:

This application seeks approval for the change of use from a commercial café/restaurant and car wash to Sui Generis to include a bar. The current use takes place between 07:00 to 17:00 on weekdays and 08:00 to 18:00 on weekends. The proposed changes include extending the opening hours of the café/restaurant/bar to 07:00 until 21:00 on weekdays and 08:00 until 21:00 on weekends and a change of use to Sui Generis to allow for the sale of alcohol.

Note:

The proposed opening times outlined in the application form are incorrect. The proposed hours outlined in the Planning Statement are the correct proposed hours.

Principle of Development:

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham

Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is located within a Major Development Location of Wokingham and as such the development would be acceptable subject to the assessment of the impact of the development on the character of the area, existing street scene, and the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers and upon highway safety.

Policy CP15 of the Core Strategy allows for the redevelopment, refurbishment or minor extension of buildings in employment use where they are in the settlement limits and where there is no net loss of Class B floor space. The proposal would not alter the existing floor space, therefore, in accordance with Policy CP15 in terms of employment floor space within the Borough. It is also complemented by sufficient car parking in an accessible location and without any detriment to the character of the area.

Further to this, Paragraph 85 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that decisions 'should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development'. The proposal would be in accordance with this requirement.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that 'maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment'. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states planning permission will be granted if development is 'of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life'.

The site is located on a busy crossroads and is surrounded by various office buildings, commercial premises and residential flats.

The existing business is well established on the site and holds an urban visual appearance within the local environment. The existing site comprises a large expanse of hardstanding, signage and other commercial features, many of which are remnants from the prior fuel station that operated on the site. This includes the large forecourt canopy and sales shop.

The proposed changes would be contained within the existing building and would not result in any visual change to the external appearance of the building. Therefore, there would be no detrimental impact to the character of the host building or public realm.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Loss of light, Overbearing and Overlooking:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity and Policy TB20 of the MDD Plan requires that there be no harmful impact on the amenity of adjoining land uses in terms of noise, fumes and disturbance.

Given the corner location and the orientation of the building in relation to the neighbouring buildings, and the fact that no external alterations or extensions are proposed, there would be no harmful impact on the outlook from the neighbouring buildings.

The neighbouring site to the west is no. 400 Reading Road which comprises a two and a half storey block of flats, to the south is 'Corner House', a three-storey block of flats. Due to the sufficient separation distances of approximately 11m between the existing café and the flank walls of the flats, it is considered that the proposed changes would not have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of the occupiers.

Noise:

The proposal includes the selling of alcohol and extending the opening hours of the café/restaurant/bar to allow for the business to remain open until 21:00 across the week.

MDD Local Plan TB20 states that planning permission will only be granted for commercial development proposals throughout the Borough that demonstrate:

- a) There is no harmful impact on the amenity of adjoining land uses in terms of noise, fumes and disturbance
- b) There is no significant impact on highway safety
- c) There is no significant adverse visual impact
- d) There is no significant adverse environmental impact

Policy CC06 of the MDDLPP relates to noise. It states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed noise impacts to protect noise sensitive receptors (both existing and proposed) from noise impacts in line with Appendix 1 of the MDD.

The noise impact of the development must be assessed. Where there is no adverse impact (No Observed Effect Level) then noise will not be a material consideration. Where there is an adverse effect (Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level to Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level), then further requirements must be met.

A noise impact assessment was not required to support the application owing to the building not being altered and the existing café/restaurant provision. There is no outside music proposed, and by virtue of regulatory requirements, much of the noise will be controlled via the Alcohol Licence.

The uses on the site already operate between the hours of 07:00 and 17:00 on weekdays and 08:00 and 18:00 on weekends. Winnersh Parish Council raised objection to the proposed extended operational hours due to potential disturbance and nuisance for the surrounding residential properties. However, this was based on an 23:00 closing time, however, the time proposed for closing would be 21:00.

In addition, the World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises that the time base for daytime hours is 07:00 – 23:00, with the hours between 23:00 and 07:00 being defined as nighttime hours:

Table 3.2: Summary of Noise Criteria: WHO

Residential Environment	Critical Health Effect	L _{Aeq}	L _{AFmax}	Time Base
Outdoor living area	Serious annoyance, daytime and evening	55	-	07:00-23:00
	Moderate annoyance, daytime and evening	50	-	07:00-23:00
Dwelling, indoors	Speech intelligibility and moderate annoyance, daytime and evening	35	-	07:00-23:00
Inside bedrooms	Sleep disturbance, night-time	30	45	23:00-07:00
Outside bedrooms	Sleep disturbance, window open (outdoor values)	45	60	23:00-07:00

Therefore, the proposed operational hours of the café/restaurant/bar would be confined to hours defined by the WHO as daytime. In addition, the site is located in an area where background noise is already a significant factor by virtue of the site being surrounded on two sides by an A and B road, and on a major crossroads with four-way traffic lights. Adjacent to the site to the southeast is Sainsburys Superstore and carpark which operates until 22:00 (16:00 on Sundays).

In addition, the Planning Statement outlines the purpose for the proposed changes and states: *'The proposal is for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises. The alcohol offering will complement the existing food and beverage menu, enhancing the customer experience in line with similar cafes in the area'*.

Examples of other similar commercial activities taking place on Reading Road that are within close proximity to the application site include Rangamati take away (closing time 23:00 across the week), Dragon Inn Restaurant (closing time 22:00 across the week), Winnersh Fish and Chip Shop Takeaway (open until 22:00 across the week), and Subway eat-in and take-out (open until between 08:00 and 22:00 across the week). The proposed changes are not expected to have a significant impact on the number of people visiting the site or on the existing activities that take place on the site. Therefore, noise levels generated at the site would be similar to levels as existing and would not result in detrimental noise impact or disturbance over and beyond the existing degree shared within the setting and is acceptable.

No comments were received from the council's Environmental Health officer.

It should be noted however, that a condition relating to operational hours will tie with the Alcohol Licence (PR0548) which specifies the opening hours and licensing hours as 07:00-23:00 (Monday to Friday, 08:00-23:00 Saturday and Sunday. In addition, pre-booked Christmas parties during December 00:00 closing.

In conclusion, the impact on adjoining neighbours has been considered in detail and informed by third party comments. Based on this assessment and the site-specific circumstances, it is concluded that the proposal would not cause any significant harm

to the amenities of adjoining occupiers in accordance with policies CP1, CP3, CC06, CC07 and guidance in the BDG.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street parking standards.

The Council's Highways officer was consulted regarding the proposal and raised no objection. They commented:

"The applicant proposes to change the uses of existing Café shop/Restaurant (Class E) to Sui Generis use for allowing the sale of alcohol and extension of operating hours. The existing access, parking and site area will be retained.

Traffic Impacts

In view of the site area to be 100m², the traffic generated from extended operating hours during the evening peak hours will unlikely have significant impact on the local highway network.

Parking Provisions

As the site will remain primarily food-led and alcohol as an ancillary offering, the existing site classification in WBC Car Parking Standards (Class A3) will remain valid. No additional demand for car parking is expected".

Conclusion:

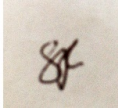
The proposal would not alter the existing building and would create conditions in which the business could adapt and expand. The proposal would not have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the wider area and the nearby residential properties and is recommended for approval.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Not required

Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	28 July 2025
Earliest date for decision:	16 July 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	29.7.25

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Insert where relevant

Contaminated Land Consultation
Local Authorities
Green Routes and Riverside Path
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Borough Parishes
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
District Town and Local Centre
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Primary and Secondary Shop Front
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
JCEB Mineral Safeguarding Area
Local Plan Update Submitted Sites