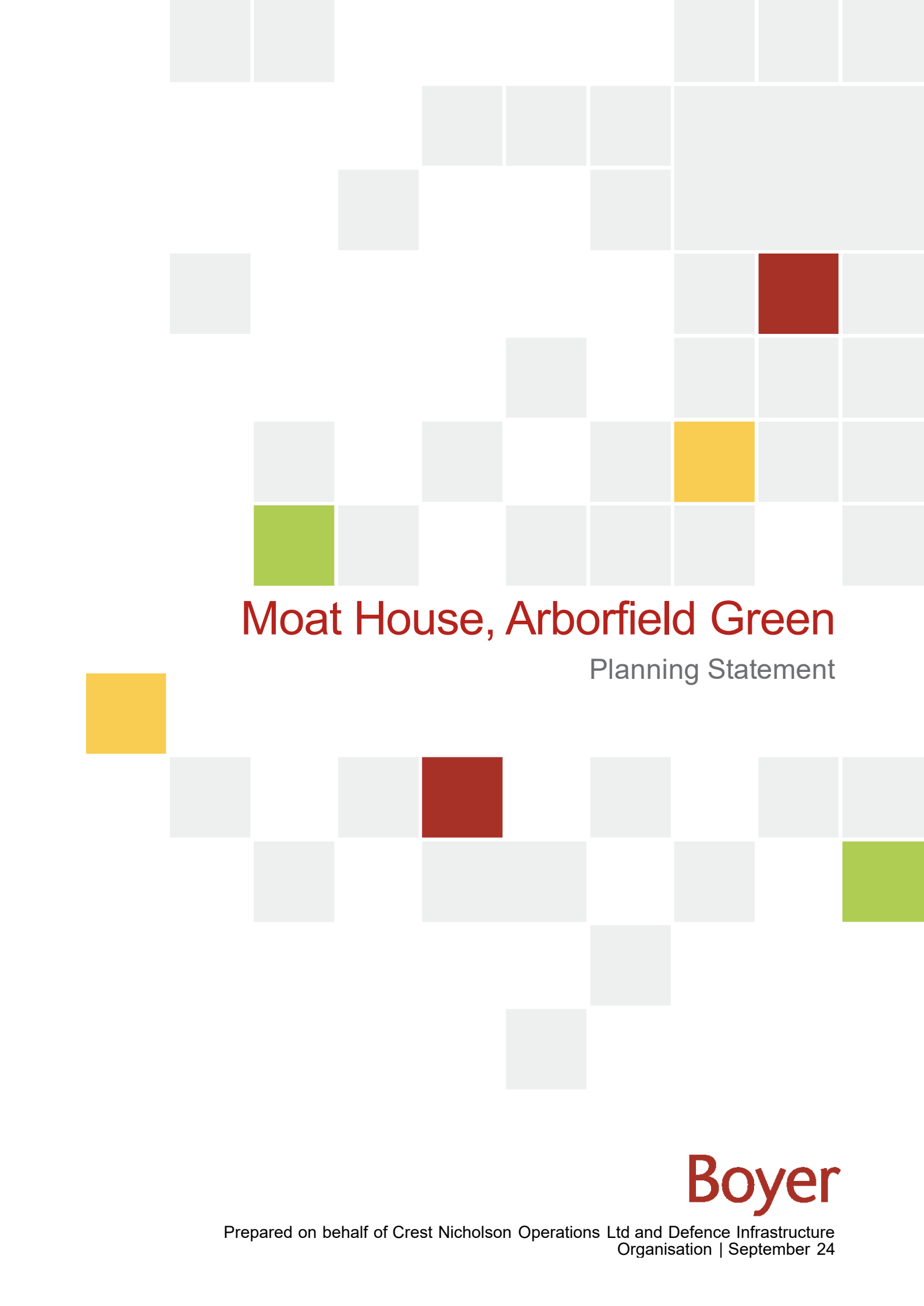




Moat House, Arborfield Green

Planning Statement



Boyer

Prepared on behalf of Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd and Defence Infrastructure Organisation | September 24

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd and Defence Infrastructure Organisation ('the Applicant') for submission to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), in support of a Full Planning and Listed Building Consent Application relating to the Moat House, Buttenshaw Avenue, Arborfield Green (formally known as Arborfield Garrison) ('the site').
- 1.2 The planning application to which this Statement relates seeks Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the change of use from Office (Use Class E) to Residential (Use Class C3). The proposal includes internal alterations to create 4 new apartments, as well as the provision of parking spaces, amenity space, and facilities for bin and cycle storage.

- 1.3 The description of development, as set out on the application form, is as follows:

"Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the change of use of the Moat House building from office (Use Class E) to residential (Use Class C3) to provide 4 residential dwellings and associated internal roads, parking, landscaping, drainage, plant, bin and cycle storage"

- 1.4 The proposed development has been the subject of pre-application discussions with Officers at WBC, further details of which can be found within **Section 3** of this Statement.

Accompanying Documentation

- 1.5 The application is accompanied by a number of plans and documents, all of which are listed in the schedule provided in the Covering Letter which accompanies this Full Planning and Listed Building Consent Application.

Structure of the Planning Statement

- 1.6 The Planning Statement is structured as follows:
- **Section 2** – sets out the context for the proposed development, including a description of the site, its surroundings and characteristics and constraints along with the site's planning history;
 - **Section 4** - provides a description of the proposed development and an overview of the pre-application discussions with WBC;
 - **Section 5** – provides an overview of national and local planning policy and guidance considered relevant to determination of the application;
 - **Section 6** – then provides an assessment of the proposed development against the identified planning policy framework; and
 - **Section 7** – provides a summary of the application and conclusions.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

Site Context

- 2.1 The site is located centrally within Arborfield Green (formally Arborfield Garrison).
- 2.2 Arborfield Garrison and the adjoining land to the south, known as Hogwood Farm, are identified in Policy CP18 of the WBC Core Strategy (2010) as a Strategic Development Location (SDL) which is identified as being capable of delivering around 3,500 new homes.
- 2.3 Arborfield Green is situated approximately four kilometres to the south west of Wokingham town centre and five kilometres south of the M4 motorway (junction 11). The settlements of Arborfield and Arborfield Cross lie to the north-west, whilst Barkham lies to the north east.
- 2.4 In April 2015, Hybrid planning permission (Ref: O/2014/2280) was granted for the phased redevelopment of Arborfield Garrison, which forms the northern portion of the SDL. Planning permission was sought for up to 2,000 dwellings, alongside a district centre, a transport interchange, a village square, a neighbourhood centre, a primary and secondary school, car parking, public open space, sports pitches, play areas, community gardens/allotments, landscaping, new roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridleways, sustainable urban drainage systems, two new areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), a new roundabout junction to the A327 Reading Road with an extension to the Nine Mile Ride, and new accesses.
- 2.5 The Moat House comprises a Grade II Listed Building, which is accessed from Buttenshaw Avenue. It sits centrally within the Arborfield Green development, in close proximity to the junction of Princess Marina Drive and Biggs Lane. The Moat House sits to the west of Parcel S, as identified on the Land Use Parameter Plan (Ref. N81-2240 PL06 Rev E).
- 2.6 When Outline planning permission (ref: O/2014/2280) was secured for Arborfield Green a final use for the existing Moat House was not determined. Accordingly, the Moat House has no proposed use indicated on the approved parameter plans for the development.
- 2.7 Instead, it was identified as part of the submission documentation that the Moat House would be retained with alternative future uses for the Moat House to be explored as part of any future submissions.
- 2.8 As part of the Outline Planning Application, the requirement for a Development Brief was specified under Condition 8 for 'The Moat, Moat House, Parcels S and AA ("The Moat Area")'. As such, 'The Moat Area' Development Brief was submitted (ref. 181067) in April 2018 and subsequently approved in April 2019. The Development Brief set out a number of design principles and parameters for these areas within Arborfield Green, including setting out a number of potential options for a future use of the Moat House, which focused on a residential use.

The Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.9 The Moat House is a Grade II Listed Building and overlooks the 'Moated Site North of the Moat House' which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument adjacent to the northern boundary of the site, south of Princess Marina Drive.
- 2.10 The application site covers 0.53 hectares of partially previously developed land, including the Moat House (Grade II Listed), an internal access road leading to it from Buttenshaw Avenue, and a large hardstanding area to the north of the Moat House which was formerly used as a car park. The site also features an area of open space with several trees. Furthermore, an area of open space characterised by a number of trees is located in the south west corner of the site.
- 2.11 The site is accessible from Buttenshaw Avenue off Princess Marina Drive and Biggs Lane. The site is well-contained, bordered by hedgerows and tree cover to the west, north, and south, while the eastern side remains open. Development Parcel S is located directly adjacent to the site and is identified in the approved Land Use Parameter Plan (ref. PL06 Rev. L) as a residential parcel, in accordance with the Hybrid planning permission (ref. O/2014/2280) and will deliver 4/5 homes.
- 2.12 The site contains a number of trees, with the majority located along the perimeters of the application boundary. A number of these trees are covered by a Tree Protection Order (TPO) associated with the site, details of which are contained in the Arboricultural Implications Report which accompanies this submission. Furthermore, the site is located in Flood Zone 1, which carries the lowest risk of fluvial flooding.
- 2.13 The site is surrounded by a number of development parcels, along with existing dwellings which were homes for those working for Defence Infrastructure Organisation, when the site was utilised as an army school. These homes have been retained as part of the wider Arborfield Green development and are located to the east and south of the site. Further east, across Biggs Lane, are Parcels U1 and V2, which received planning consent in 2019 and delivered 111 homes (ref. 190737). To the west of the site on the adjacent side of Buttenshaw Avenue sits Parcel AA which received consent in 2019 for 44 new homes (ref. 191753), and the existing cricket square and pavilion, which received consent in 2024 as part of the Sports and Community Infrastructure application (ref. 223764) for the demolition and redevelopment of the existing Pavilion building along with improvements to the cricket square.
- 2.14 The site is approximately a 4-minute walk from a bus stop served by the Leopard 3 route, which connects Wokingham and Reading. This service runs every 20 minutes until 8 PM, then hourly until 11 PM, Monday to Saturday, with a half-hourly service on Sundays. The closest train station is Wokingham, located a 11-minute drive away or can be reached via the Leopard 3 bus service. Wokingham train station provides services to Reading and London.
- 2.15 The District Centre in Arborfield Green received planning permission in October 2023 (ref. 230872) and once completed, will be a 15-minute walk from the site. The District Centre will offer a variety of shops and services, including a large supermarket.

The Moat House

- 2.16 The Moat House is a Grade II Listed Building, featuring a red brick, two-storey structure with additional ancillary office space within the roof space. The building was originally constructed in 1906 for the Commanding Officer of the Army Remount Depot (the use of Arborfield Green between 1904 until 1937). The eclectic, historicist design is noted to be unusual for the military and is thought to allude to Bearwood Manor (located in Sindlesham, 2 miles north east of the site) and perhaps the presence of the historic moated site which the House overlooks. The Moat House is designated as a result of its architectural interest, quality of detailing, intactness, historic interest and group value.
- 2.17 The building is currently vacant (its most recent use being an office to support Crest's construction of Arborfield Green), with its windows boarded up to prevent theft and damage. The site perimeter is also fenced, but the access road off Buttenshaw Avenue remains in use for the temporary placement of materials while development is underway for surrounding parcels. As the building is Grade II Listed, Listed Building Consent is required for internal and external alterations to facilitate the provision of apartments.

Scheduled Ancient Monument

- 2.18 As stated above, the Scheduled Ancient Monument, known as 'Moated Site North of the Moat House' sits adjacent to the northern boundary of the site, south of Princess Marina Drive. The scheduled area includes the island, ditch and a 2 metre buffer zone. The Monument is characterised by a dry medieval moat with a single island and visible earthworks on the east, south and west sides and its significance is derived from its historic and archaeological interest as a surviving example of a medieval moat.

Planning History

- 2.19 The site has not been the subject of any recent relevant planning applications.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 This Full Planning and Listed Building Consent application seeks approval for:

“Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the Change of Use of the Moat House from office (Use Class E) to residential (Use Class C3) to provide 4 residential dwellings and associated internal roads, parking, landscaping, drainage, plant, bin and cycle storage”

- 3.2 The proposals seek to convert an existing vacant Grade II Listed Building in the heart of Arborfield Green to provide new residential development.
- 3.3 The proposals comprise internal and external alterations to the Moat House to provide x4 new apartments along with associated parking, amenity space, landscaping, and cycle and bin store.
- 3.4 Apartments 1 and 2 will be situated on the ground floor, with Apartment 2 also incorporating the existing basement space to provide a second bedroom or study space. A door will be installed in an existing opening to provide adequate daylight to the room. Apartments 3 and 4 are proposed across the first floor and second floor, with the kitchen and living spaces on the first floor and the bedroom(s) on the second floor. Apartment 4 will use the existing staircase to access the second floor, while an additional staircase will be provided for Apartment 3. A summary of the proposed apartments is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the proposed apartments

Apartment	No. of Beds	Size (sqm)
Apartment 1	1	64.8
Apartment 2	2	86.4
Apartment 3	2	117.4
Apartment 4	1	84.3

- 3.5 Where proposed walls are to be removed in order to accommodate the 4 new apartments, these are indicated on the Existing Floor Plans Showing Walls Removed Plan (ref. 24-J4633-02). Careful consideration has been given to the internal layout in order to minimize the number of walls that need to be removed, only seeking to making alterations where absolutely necessary to support a residential use.
- 3.6 Minor external alterations are also proposed, as shown on the Proposed Elevations Plan (ref. 24 – J4633-12). These alterations primarily involve removing an existing handrail and step and installing a new step along the side elevation, as well as removing existing vents and pipes from the front elevation. An additional external door will also be installed in the front elevation to provide natural light to the basement bedroom and an emergency access point.

- 3.7 The site is currently accessed via a private road from Buttenshaw Avenue. As part of this application, no amendments are required to the existing access to the site which will be retained.
- 3.8 It is intended that the access road will remain private, with the management and maintenance of the access road undertaken by a dedicated Management Company.
- 3.9 8 car parking spaces are to be provided along the access road to the Moat House, which are separated with areas of landscaping. 4 of the parking spaces will also have access to Electric Vehicle Charging facilities. The existing area of hardstanding north of the proposed cycle and bin store will be removed and replaced with soft landscaping to provide an attractive landscaped area.
- 3.10 No amendments are required to the current drainage infrastructure, with the apartments connecting to the existing foul drainage.
- 3.11 Regarding landscaping, new native hedge planting is proposed along existing close board timber fencing to rear gardens to the south with new planting provided along the western boundary of the site. Furthermore, estate railings are proposed in the south west corner of the site which define the boundary of the Moat House, but maintain open views across from the cricket pitch.
- 3.12 The proposed amenity space will be bordered by areas of long grass and wildflower with an area of regularly mown amenity grass located more centrally which incorporates timber benches. Shrub planting is provided along the front elevation of the Moat House along with slab paving and native hedge which will screen the parking bays from the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Pre-Application Engagement

- 3.13 The Applicant submitted a pre-application request to WBC in June 2024 to seek advice relating to the change of use from Office (Use Class E) to Residential (Use Class C3) to create 4 new apartments at the Moat House.
- 3.14 A virtual meeting was held on the 1 July 2024 followed by a site visit with WBC Officers (Planning, Heritage and Trees / Landscaping) on 17 July 2024. Following discussions with Officers, the following amendments have been made:
- The proposed parking has been rearranged to break up the area of hardstanding;
 - The cycle and bin store have been combined and are located to the north of parking bays 1-3.
 - Additional hedgerow and fencing has been incorporated to enclose the amenity space proposed for the future residents of the Moat House;
 - Planters and a low wall is proposed to the north of the building to provide a buffer between the parking area and the Moat House.

- The entrance to the apartments has been re-arranged in order to retain the secondary wall leading to the staircase;
- The entrance to Apartments 1 and 2 has been re-located to facilitate better access;
- Apartments 1 and 3 has been re-arranged in order to provide a more appropriate layout for future occupiers; and
- The existing doorframes which are of historical significance have been retained.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 This section provides an overview of national and local planning policy considered relevant to the determination of the proposals subject of this application.
- 4.2 Section 38 of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.3 The Development Plan for WBC currently comprises the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014).
- 4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (2023), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and Wokingham Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), in particular the Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location (SDL), are also relevant material considerations.

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)

- 4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides an overarching planning policy framework against which all local plans and neighbourhood plans should be prepared and against which all planning applications are determined.
- 4.6 The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan being the starting point for decision making but does provide guidance to local planning authorities and decision-takers.
- 4.7 The over-arching national planning policy theme evident within the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which the Government has advised should be at the heart of the planning system.
- 4.8 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF establishes that:

‘...achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives. These objectives give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

‘a) An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) An environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy’.

- 4.9 As detailed in Paragraph 10, at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In addition, Paragraph 11 advises that development that accords with an up-to-date development plan should be approved ‘...without delay’.
- 4.10 The Government also strongly encourages local planning authorities to approach decision taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, and Paragraph 38 states that:

‘Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way... and work proactively with applications to secure development that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible’.

- 4.11 The Government also attaches great importance to conserving and enhancing the historic environment in Section 16 of the NPPF. Paragraph 201 states that Local Planning Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage assets that may be affected by a proposal taking into account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise.
- 4.12 Furthermore, Paragraph 203 states that Local Planning Authorities should take account of:
- *“the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
 - *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
 - *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”*
- 4.13 In addition, Paragraph 208 states *“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. “*

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 4.14 The Planning Practice Guidance sets out guidance on a wide range of topics which are considered relevant to the determination of this application, including inter alia:
- Design
 - Climate Change

- Historic Environment
- Natural Environment
- Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space
- Renewable and low carbon energy, and
- Travel plans, transport assessment and statements in decision-taking.

NPPF Consultation

- 4.15 On 2 August 2024, the Government launched a consultation on proposed NPPF reforms, which will close on 24 September 2024. The consultation is proposing a suite of changes, including seeking to revise the standard method calculations to increase housing delivery in most Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). The proposed reforms also introduce 'grey belt' land. However, as these reforms are currently under consultation, they do not carry any weight at this time.

Partially Revoked South East Plan

- 4.16 Policy NRM6 of the partially revoked southeast plan states that new residential development which is likely to have a significant effect on the ecological integrity of Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Such measures should be agreed with Natural England.

Local Policy

- 4.17 As indicated above, the development plan for WBC currently comprises the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), and the Management Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan (2014).
- 4.18 Local planning policies from these documents which are considered to be relevant to the determination of this application are set out below.

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy

- 4.19 The Wokingham Core Strategy (2010) sets the strategic direction for the Borough up to 2026. The following policies from this are considered to be relevant to the determination of this application.
- CP1 - Sustainable Development
 - CP2 - Inclusive Communities
 - CP3 - General Principle for Development
 - CP4 - Infrastructure Requirements
 - CP5 - Housing Mix, Density and Affordability
 - CP6 - Managing Travel Demand

- CP7 - Biodiversity
- CP8 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- CP9 - Scale and Location of development proposals
- CP18 - Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location

Wokingham Borough Management Development Delivery Document (MDD)

4.20 The MDD takes forward and develops the policies of the Core Strategy. It contains a number of cross cutting policies which have particular relevance when considering the Full application. The following policies are considered relevant to this application.

- CC01 - Presumption in Favor of Sustainable Development
- CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
- CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks
- CC07 – Parking
- TB05 – Housing Mix
- TB07 – Internal Space Standards
- TB08 – Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Standards for Residential Development
- TB21 – Landscape Character
- TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
- Policy TB24 Designated Heritage Assets

Emerging Local Plan

- 4.21 Wokingham Borough Council are currently in the process of undertaking a Local Plan Update which will help guide the future development strategy and long-term spatial vision for the Borough in the years up to 3036.
- 4.22 Due to the early stages of the Local Plan Update, currently it does not carry any weight when determining the application.

Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan (2019 – 2036)

4.23 The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan was made on 22 April 2020 and now forms part of the statutory development plan for the area. The following policies from this are considered to be relevant to the determination of this application:

- IRS2: Recognise, Respect and Preserve Identity and Rural Setting of Settlements
- IRS3: Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment and Green Spaces

- IRS4: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Character of the Area
- AD1: New Development within Development Limits
- AD2: Prioritising Housing for Local Needs
- AD3: High Quality Development with Generous Open Space, Properly Landscaped

Other Relevant Documents

- 4.24 As provided for in Policy CP18 of the Core Strategy, the development of the Arborfield Garrison SDL is guided by a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was adopted by the Council in October 2011.
- 4.25 The Arborfield Garrison SPD does not contain detailed proposals for the SDL, although it is a material consideration in determining the planning application.
- 4.26 Additionally, the approved Development Brief for the 'Moat House Area' (ref. 181067) is a material consideration. This document evaluates the site's constraints and opportunities, outlining key design strategies and principles aimed at guiding the future development of The Moat Area. It also establishes the approach to be taken in developing The Moat, Moat House, Parcel S, and Parcel AA.
- 4.27 Further guidance of relevance to the development of the Moat House is included in the following SPDs:
- The Borough Design Guide SPD (2012); and
 - The Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2010).
- 4.28 Relevant extracts from the planning policies and guidance documents highlighted above are discussed in relation to the proposed development in **Section 3** and also (where relevant) in the technical reports, drawings and associated documents which are included as part of this submission.

5. CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING ISSUES

- 5.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides an assessment of the proposed development against relevant planning policy and other material considerations.

Principle of Development

- 5.2 The site sits within the wider Arborfield Garrison SDL which is identified as an allocated strategic site for housing and associated infrastructure in Policy CP17 of the Core Strategy. Policy CP18 of the Core Strategy sets out requirements for the SDL which is to deliver ‘a *sustainable, well designed mixed-use development*’ which includes the provision of new homes.
- 5.3 Furthermore, Policy CC02 of the MDD states that *“Development proposals within the areas allocated as SDL in the adopted Core Strategy (policies CP18-21) will be permitted that are within the identified development limits”*.
- 5.4 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals which maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment and provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure, and adaptable schemes which enhance the overall sustainability of the area.
- 5.5 The site sits centrally within the Arborfield Garrison SDL and within the development limits.
- 5.6 Whilst hybrid planning permission for the redevelopment of the wider Arborfield Garrison was granted in April 2015 (Ref: O/2014/2280), this did not include a change of use for the Moat House. However, the approved Development Brief for the ‘Moat House Area’ (ref. 181067) set out a number of potential options to bring the Moat House back into a residential use, which supports the principle for converting the existing building back to a residential use.
- 5.7 Since 1985, the Moat House has been used as office space, initially for the DOI and later by Crest during the early stages of the Arborfield Green development. The site has been vacant since December 2022 and subsequently has become vulnerable to theft and damage, resulting in the building now being boarded up to prevent further damage. The Moat House is no longer functional as office space and is in need of repurposing to ensure its longevity.
- 5.8 Repurposing the building will ensure its preservation and secure the future of this heritage asset. Such an approach is consistent with Paragraph 192 (a) of the NPPF which states, in determining applications, that account should be taken of the *“desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable use consistent with their conservation”*.
- 5.9 No substantial alterations are proposed to the building, with its exterior remaining largely unchanged (save for minor decluttering amendments as discussed below), with improvements to its setting through landscaping and maintained / increased open space. The ongoing upkeep of the building as a residential property will further enhance its value as a heritage asset.

- 5.10 The development is in accordance with the approved Development Brief through repurposing the building to provide 4 high quality apartments, which the Brief sets out as being an appropriate option for the Moat House.
- 5.11 As discussed above, the site sits within the Development Limits where the principle of residential development is supported. The proposal would have clear social and economic benefits, and the site would be in a sustainable location.
- 5.12 The social benefit (and ultimately also an environmental benefit), of making a much more effective and efficient use of the land in this context, through creating a well-designed development, which will improve the local areas sense of place, ensures that the scheme demonstrably outweighs any adverse impact which may arise from the development. With proposed new green spaces, the development will foster local and accessible facilities, supporting the vision of the wider Arborfield Green. This will contribute to social cohesion, in contrast to the existing use as a vacant building, which does not offer the same social benefits.
- 5.13 The development plan also makes it clear there is a significant need for new housing and PDL should be utilised. This is consistent with Paragraph 124(c) of the NPPF, which notes that decisions should *'give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes'*.
- 5.14 Given the above, the principle of the change of use of the Moat House from Office (Use Class E) to Residential (Use Class C3) to provide 4 residential dwellings is in line with planning policy and therefore the principle of development is acceptable.

Heritage

- 5.15 Policy TB24 states that the Borough will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets and proposals for building works to a heritage asset should retain existing features of historic significance, or design quality into the scheme.
- 5.16 A Heritage Statement has been prepared by Iceni and is submitted alongside this application in order to assess the impact on the Moat House, a Grade II Listed Building, and the Scheduled Ancient Monument, identified as 'Moated Site North of the Moat House'.
- 5.17 The Heritage Statement provides a comprehensive review of the historic development of the site and surrounding areas, and considers the significance of the assets and subsequently assesses the impact that the proposed development.
- 5.18 The significance of the Moat House as a Grade II listed asset derives from its architectural and historical interest, rather than its wider setting. The building stands as an example of early 20th century interpretation of the Jacobean style and provides reference to former main house on the estate by Robert Kerr. The brickwork is of good quality with well executed details in the doorcase and detailing.
- 5.19 The Moat House however stands within a heavily altered setting following the Arborfield Remount Depot closing and subsequently being re-purposed as the Arborfield Garrison, an

Army Technical School. This resulted in large scale development surrounding the area. As such, it is concluded the asset's setting is of little interest with the majority of its surroundings holding no informative value on the significance of the Grade II building.

- 5.20 The Scheduled Ancient Monument, 'Moated Site North of the Moat House' directly north of the Moat House, features distinctive medieval earthwork as a surviving example of a medieval moat. The asset holds the potential to retain valuable information relating to the layout of the medieval and post medieval structures.
- 5.21 The Moat House is within the immediate setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and provides a minor contribution to the setting through evidencing the continuation of the land being occupied. As the proposals primarily focus on the internal alterations and minor landscaping the proposed development, it is considered to result in no material change to the setting of the Scheduled Monument. Furthermore, the Monument is screened by significant mature trees which provide a clear differentiation of setting. This will be further bolstered by additional landscaping which will assist to preserve and sustain the setting of the Scheduled Monument.
- 5.22 The proposed internal alterations have been carefully designed in order to enhance the appreciation of the Moat House's key historic features, including the entrance hall, staircase, original fabric, and historic door frames. Furthermore, whilst there is a small loss of historic fabric to facilitate the provision of 4 apartments, it is considered these changes are minor in nature. Indeed, given the building's previous modern interventions, the removal of some of the partitions identified offers the opportunity to reinstate the original layouts.
- 5.23 The proposed external changes are limited to removing cluttering downpipes and air-conditioning vents from the principle elevation, which are considered to be a heritage benefit as it will present cleaner, more original elevations which allow for a greater appreciation of the asset's architecture.
- 5.24 In summary, it is considered that the proposed scheme would result in overall no harm and provide a realistic optimal modern day use for the building and therefore accords with Policy TB24 and the NPPF.

Housing Mix and Tenure

- 5.25 Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB05 of the MDD state that planning permission will be granted for residential development which provides a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures and sizes. The housing mix of residential proposals should meet the current and projected needs of households and reflect the underlying character of the local area. Furthermore, TB07 requires new residential development to meet internal space standards.
- 5.26 The proposed development includes one and two-bedroom apartments, all of which meet the required internal space standards. Due to the constraints of the Grade II Listed Moat House and importance to retain as much of the existing layout and features as possible, it is not feasible to include a three-bedroom apartment.

5.27 The proposed development falls below the minimum threshold for providing affordable housing, and as such, in accordance with Policy CP5, affordable housing is not required to be delivered as part of this scheme.

5.28 Given the above, the proposed development complies with Policy CP5, TB05 and TB07.

Landscape and Open Space

5.29 Policies CC03 and TB21 of the MDD state that development proposals should incorporate high quality planting and landscaping, and proposals must retain or enhance features which contribute to the character of the landscape and the overall landscape value of the site.

5.30 Furthermore, Policy TB08 of the MDD requires open space, indoor or outdoor play and sport and recreational facilities to be provided on site as part of residential development proposals to improve the accessibility and quality of local facilities.

5.31 This application adopts a landscape-led strategy through enhancing the existing vegetation on the site to create an attractive environment to live. The submitted landscape scheme (as shown on drawing ref. 1665/001 Rev A has been developed around the principle of the retention and reinforcement of the site's character and vegetated setting.

5.32 Dedicated communal amenity space is provided for the residents of the Moat House, along with the landscaping details provided to the existing area of hardstanding north of the proposed bin and cycle store. The landscape proposals create complementary relationships between the existing built form and its setting, reflecting the wider character and historic nature of this part of the site.

5.33 0.23 hectares of communal amenity space is provided for the residents of the Moat House. This will feature timber benches, wildflowers, new planting a central mown grass area. New native hedge planting is provided at the southern boundary of the site, along with estate railings at the corner to define the boundary of the amenity space whilst retaining open views from the cricket pitch.

5.34 The existing area of hardstanding is to be removed and seeded to encourage biodiversity. Furthermore, to reinforce the existing open character of the area, it is proposed to remove shrub and scrub understorey and reseed to link the SAM and former parking area.

5.35 It has therefore been demonstrated that the development of the site would cause no harm to the character and appearance of the area, offering a number of opportunities to improve the existing landscape whilst complementing the heritage asset. As such the proposals accord with Policy CC03, TB08, and TB21.

Arboriculture

5.36 Policy CC03 of the MDD requires developments to protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features whilst Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy seeks to protect and enhance the environment and landscape features of a development site in order to support flora and fauna.

- 5.37 A detailed Tree Survey and Arboricultural Implications Report has informed the design of the scheme proposals for the Moat House and is submitted alongside this application.
- 5.38 25 trees are located within or immediately adjacent to the site, 13 of which are covered by a Tree Protection Order (TPO) (ref. 1445), these are located in the north west corner of the site and near the southern and south western boundary of the site. Furthermore, one English oak tree (no. 185) is located adjacent to the southern boundary which is classed as a veteran tree in accordance with the Wokingham Veteran Tree Association database.
- 5.39 There is only one category 'A' tree (English oak no. 185), 14 category 'B', and the remaining 10 assessed as category 'C' trees.
- 5.40 As part of the proposals, all trees are proposed to be retained, with 11 trees to be pruned in order to facilitate the development. The Veteran category 'A' tree is to be retained and will be protected by fencing during construction works.
- 5.41 The proposed removal of the existing car park and the introduction of parking bays to the north of the Moat House are located within the Root Protection Zones (RPZ) of 3 trees. However, no significant or long-term damage to their root systems or rooting environments will occur through ensuring appropriate measures are taken during construction. This includes the incorporation of tree protective fencing, and shallow excavation to be undertaken manually for the relevant parts of the parking bays which are located within the RPZ.
- 5.42 Additional tree planting is incorporated within the proposed development which will add variety to the type and age of trees on site, enhancing the local landscape, and strengthen the existing arboricultural features, benefitting the long-term character of the site.
- 5.43 Overall, it is considered that there is no alteration to the main arboricultural features of the site, or to the arboricultural character and appearance of the local landscape. Therefore, the magnitude of the overall arboricultural impact of the proposed development are negligible. As such, the proposed development accords with Policy CC03 and CP7.

Access and Parking

- 5.44 Policies CP4 and CP5 of the Core Strategy state that planning permission will not be granted unless appropriate arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure and associated services have been made. These works must take into account the cumulative impact of the development and provide for sustainable forms of transport whilst enhancing road safety.
- 5.45 A Transport Assessment has been prepared by Create CE Ltd. which accompanies this application which assessed the proposed development in respect of vehicular access, trip generation, servicing and deliveries and parking provision.
- 5.46 The site is currently accessed via a private road from Buttenshaw Avenue. As part of this application, no amendments are required to the existing access to the site which will be retained.

- 5.47 It is intended that the access road will remain private, with the management and maintenance of the access road undertaken by a dedicated Management Company.
- 5.48 Policy CC07 of the MDD states that planning permission will only be granted where the proposal demonstrates the proposed parking provision meets the standards set out in Appendix 2 of the MDD in order to prevent any unacceptable impacts on the local highway network.
- 5.49 8 parking spaces are proposed within areas of hardstanding which already exist to the front of the Moat House, accessed via the private road from Buttenshaw Avenue, with 4 of the spaces provided with Electric Vehicle Charging infrastructure. The proposals therefore accord with Appendix 2 of the MDD.
- 5.50 A secure and covered cycle store will be provided, located conveniently in close proximity to the entrance to the Moat House, providing 5 cycle parking spaces. The number of spaces corresponds with WBC guidance.
- 5.51 For the purpose of refuse collection, a communal bin store is proposed towards the western boundary of the site. Refuse vehicles would reverse a short distance into the site Buttenshaw Avenue and then exit in forward gear, as agreed by the Highways Authority as part of pre-application discussions.
- 5.52 To provide links to the existing footway and cycleway network, the application proposes a new 2m footway which connects the Moat House to Princess Marina Drive, which would then allow residents to access the northern side of Princess of Marina Drive which provides further connections to the wider site, including the approved new Sports and Community Infrastructure located in close proximity to the site.
- 5.53 In conclusion, the proposed development and the associated access arrangements meet design standards and can be accessed safely by both car and non-car modes. The vehicular trips generated by the development can be accommodated on the local highway network. As such, the proposals are acceptable in transport and highways terms.

Ecology

- 5.54 Policy TB23 of the MDD and Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will only be granted where an application demonstrates they provide new opportunities through design, layout and landscaping to enhance and provide additional biodiversity features whilst providing appropriate buffer zones to conserve protected habitats and species. In addition, all new developments should be ecologically permeable and incorporate integrated green infrastructure networks.
- 5.55 Further to the ecological assessments which were undertaken, submitted and approved as part of the wider hybrid planning application a number of additional surveys have been undertaken by AECOM throughout the development period of the Arborfield Garrison Site. This survey work has informed the preparation of this Full planning application, and an Ecological Constraints Report prepared by AECOM, is submitted alongside this application.

- 5.56 As set out in the Ecology Report, the site primarily consists of neutral grassland, hardstanding, hedgerow, line of trees, sparsely vegetated land and the Moat House building.
- 5.57 A number of surveys were undertaken on 16 July to inform the report, including surveys in relation to bats, badgers, birds, great crested newt, reptiles, other notable species and invasive non-native species.
- 5.58 In relation to bats, the building retains its suitability for roosting bats and its status as a confirmed roost, with the surrounding trees and hedgerow having a low suitability for roosting bats. The proposed development will support enhanced ecological permeability through the provision of new roosting opportunities. These will include an external roost feature to be attached to the Moat House.
- 5.59 A number of recommendations have been made to minimise the impact of the proposed development on the biodiversity of the site and measures to enhance the site's biodiversity value which include measures such as retaining all trees of low suitability for roosting bats; undertaking construction at appropriate times to avoid disturbance of species; enhancing the existing tree line; undertake vegetation clearance outside of the main breeding bird season; and regularly strimming the grassland areas to deter reptiles.
- 5.60 Furthermore, methods to protect ecology during construction will be included in a Construction and Environment Management Plan.
- 5.61 Overall, the ecological information which has been submitted in support of this Full application describes the existing baseline conditions and details the mitigation measures, enhancements and compensation strategies which are recommended in light of the proposed development. Details of the long-term maintenance and monitoring requirements for the key species is also provided.
- 5.62 In summary, the site has very limited ecological significance. Through the implementation of the mitigation recommendations within the various ecological assessment reports, any adverse impacts from the proposed development upon specific habitats and protected species will be mitigated in line with relevant wildlife legislation and planning policy.
- 5.63 Further details on the ecological impacts and proposed enhancement for the proposed development can be found within the accompanying ecological report.
- 5.64 In accordance with the BNG Report, submitted alongside this application the proposed development results in a net gain of 28% for area habitat units and a net gain of 16% for hedgerow units.

Energy and Sustainability

- 5.65 The proposed Energy Strategy for the Moat House has been based around the objectives of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy Policies CP1 and Managing Development Local Plan Policy CC04, CC05, TB24 as well as the Climate Emergency Action Plan which cover Sustainable Development principles. It aims to ensure the development is constructed

to rigorous energy performance standards, whilst ensuring that any energy-efficient measures protect and respect the historic fabric of the building and its original character.

- 5.66 An Energy and Statement has been prepared by AES to support this application. The statement sets out that the key measures proposed to minimise carbon dioxide emissions will meet Part L standards.
- 5.67 It is proposed that the dwellings will be renovated following a fabric first approach to meet and exceed where possible, the current Building Regulations, with insulation standards, minimising thermal bridging and undesigned air leakage and where possible improve beyond the minimum compliance levels.
- 5.68 High efficiency gas combis or all electric heating and hot water with a dual rate electric meter are considered to be the most appropriate options and offer the most potential for this development in terms of energy efficiency. These options minimise façade penetrations and internal impacts on the building features, with an all-electric strategy in line with national and local policy.
- 5.69 The historic single glazing will be treated and draughtproofed by installing secondary glazing throughout. Apartment doors to corridors are to be replaced with units achieving a U-value of 1.40 W/m²K. Furthermore, internal wall insulation is proposed.

6. PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

6.1 The proposed development will deliver a sustainable residential development which will ensure the longevity of a heritage asset, whilst contributing to meeting the spatial strategy and housing needs within Arborfield, in line with the principles of the Arborfield Garrison SPD and Moat House Area Development Brief.

6.2 The impact resulting from the proposed development can be mitigated by planning obligations (to be contained within a Section 106 Agreement) or appropriately worded planning conditions.

S106 Obligations

6.3 The following list comprises the anticipated S106 planning obligations associated with this Full planning application. The detailed scope, including delivery mechanisms, timing, provision of land (in kind contributions) and financial contributions will be agreed with WBC and the relevant parties during the application of determination process. However, at this stage it is anticipated that contributions may be required for the following:

- Off-site highway works;
- My Journey contribution;
- Education contributions;
- Play Space / Open Space;
- Thames Basin Heaths Mitigation; and
- Landscape maintenance and management;

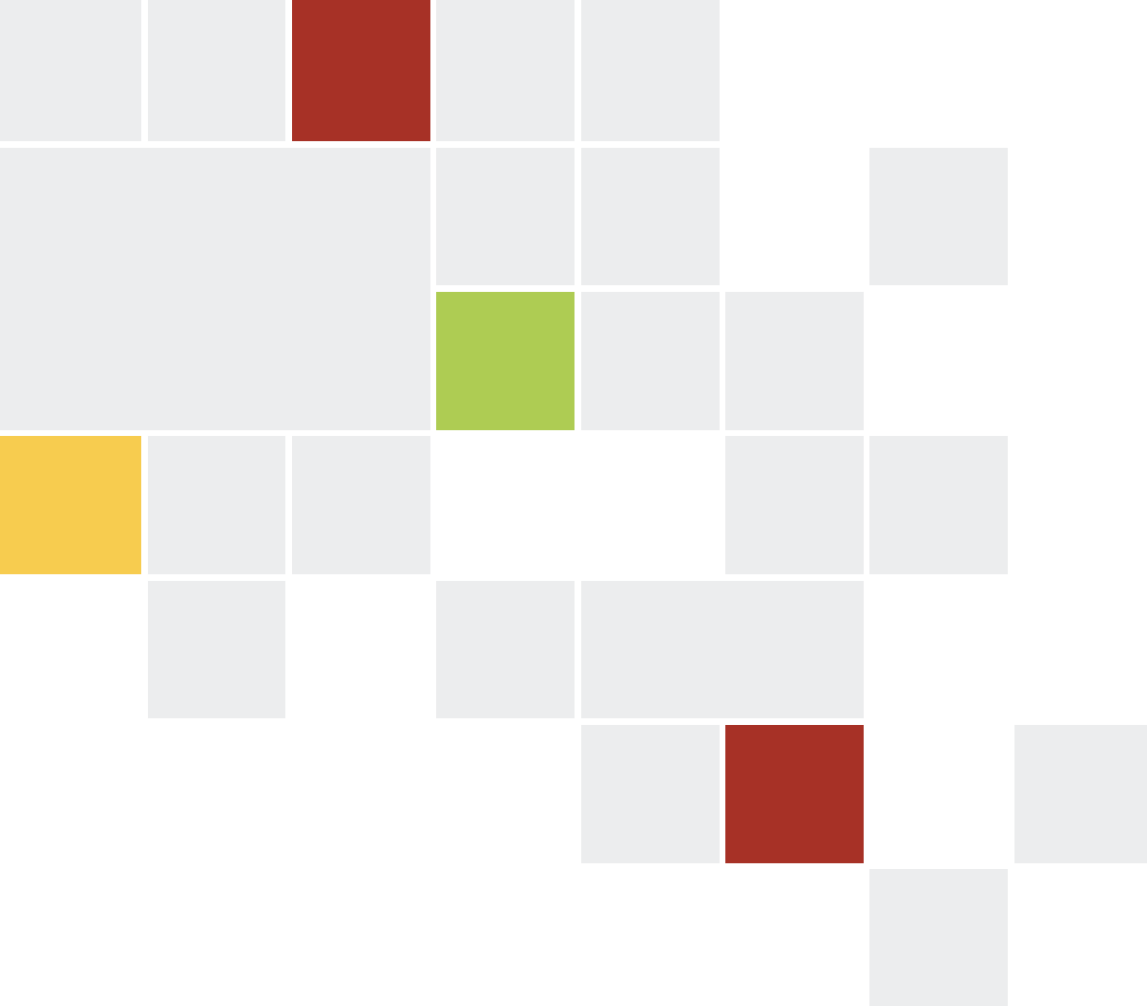
6.4 As the building was previously in use as an office, the proposed conversion to 4 apartments are expected to reduce the number of car journeys, therefore no transport contributions are envisaged. The proposals also provide a generous quantum of communal amenity space for residents. We acknowledge that the new residential use may require the following to mitigate the impact of development:

- Thames Basin Heaths Mitigation (SANG); and
- Landscape maintenance and management.

6.5 A Section 106 Agreement will be concluded before the planning application is formally determined. This will secure the provision of required infrastructure and set out schedules to govern any future submission.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The planning application to which this Planning Statement relates is submitted on behalf of Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd and Defence Infrastructure Organisation and seeks Full Planning and Listed Building consent for the change of use from office (Use Class E) to Residential (Use Class C3). The proposal includes internal and external alterations to create 4 new apartments, as well as the provision of parking spaces, amenity space, and facilities for bin and cycle storage.
- 7.2 Overall this Planning Statement has demonstrated the proposed development would be in conformity with the Council's Development Plan, the Moat House Area Development Brief, the Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location SPD, as well as National Policy as set out in the NPPF.
- 7.3 The proposed development comprises of a suitable and sustainable scheme which seeks to secure the longevity and prosperity of a currently vacant Grade II Listed Building along with landscape improvements to the surrounding area, providing an opportunity to respect and celebrate its original architectural features.
- 7.4 This planning application and the proposals contained therein are therefore commended to the Council for due consideration.



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