

Planning Statement inc. Statement of Community Involvement: Planning Application for extension and addition of pub rooms (Revised Application)

Ye Olde Leathern Bottel, Barkham Road, Wokingham.

On behalf of Monopro Ltd.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Monopro Ltd. to support a full planning application for the creation of 5 no. B&B rooms at Ye Olde Leathern Bottel public house.
- 1.2. The description of development is:
- 1.3. *"Extension of existing public house to include remodelled pub/kitchen at ground floor, loss of staff accommodation, and introduction of 5 no. rooms of accommodation at first floor; together with associated changes to access, parking, landscaping and other ancillary works."*
- 1.4. **This is a revised application following the refusal of planning application ref. 241556. That application sought permission for the above proposals, but with the addition of a further annex/ancillary building to accommodate another 8 no. rooms. This application excludes the latter element.**
- 1.5. The proposal will support the pub's offering by providing self-contained overnight accommodation for short leisure and business trips in a semi-rural setting but with excellent access to Wokingham Town Centre and the motorway network. The accommodation will provide an additional and alternative revenue stream for the pub.
- 1.6. The application is considered to be non-major development because it is less than 1,000 sqm of additional floorspace in a site area of less than 1 hectare (Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015).
- 1.7. The application is supported by a suite of reports and plans, as listed in the covering letter. In particular, this statement should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement which provides details of the design process relating to the proposals.

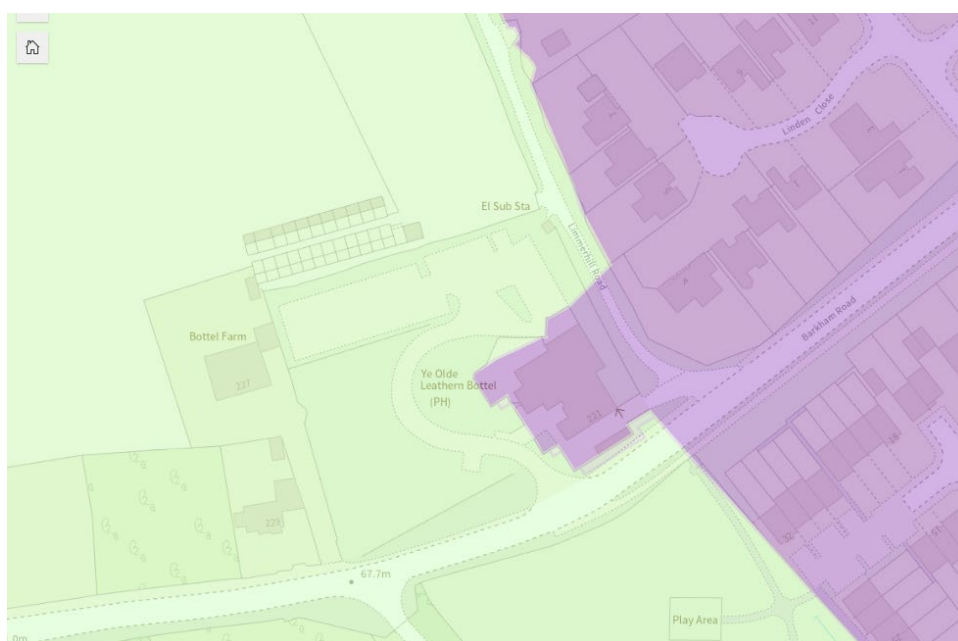
2. The Site

2.1. The site is located to the north of Barkham Road and west of Limmerhill Road. It is bounded to the north with open agricultural land (currently the subject of a live application for residential development, see below), to the east by residential dwellings, to the south by Barkham Road and to the west by Bottel Farm building and its access.

2.2. The site comprises:

- the extended public house building with front and rear terraces and side (grassed) garden;
- curved access from Barkham Road;
- a large car park to the rear;
- and associated landscaped grounds, included numerous mature trees, hedges and ornamental shrub planting.

2.3. Unusually, the pub building is located within the Development Limits of Wokingham, whereas the gardens and car park are not (see extract below).



2.4. The pertinent planning constraints/considerations for development of the site are as follows:

Constraint	Comment
Location	Part inside and part outside the Wokingham settlement boundary.

Flood Zone	Flood Zone 1 (the area with the lowest flood risk)
Greenbelt	No
Landscape	No designation. Identified on local mapping as 'Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace' but not formally designated.
Ecology	No designation on the site. Within the '7km zone' of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Adjacent to Local Wildlife Site south of Barkham Road
TPOs	Yes
Built Heritage	Not affected by any Conservation Areas or Statutorily/Non-Statutorily Listed Heritage Assets.
Archaeology	Not within an Area of High Archaeological Potential.
Minerals	Not safeguarded under the Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (adopted 2023) despite including a small area protected by the Replacement Minerals Plan for Berkshire
Contamination	None known.
Air Quality	Not within an AQMA.

3. Planning History

3.1. According to the Council's online records, the public house has been the subject of the relevant planning application in recent years as follows:

- **Ref. 241556: Refused 14/08/2024**
Full application for the proposed extension to the existing public house to include remodelled pub/kitchen at ground floor, loss of staff accommodation, and introduction of 5 no. rooms of accommodation at first floor. Additionally, the erection of a ancillary building to provide a further 8 no. rooms; together with associated changes to access, parking, landscaping and other ancillary works.
- **Ref. 231990: Refused 09/10/2023**
Full application for the proposed creation of a site access to serve the existing Public House and the Equestrian centre along with clearance of the former access.
- **Ref. 011287: Refused 18/02/2002**
Proposed erection of various illuminated and non-illuminated public house signs.
- **Ref. 001111: Refused 02/01/2001**
Proposed installation of lighting to front of building and rear car park security lighting.

3.2. The field behind the pub was also recently the subject of the following application which was refused:

- **Ref. 232621: Validated 25/10/2023**
Outline Planning Application for up to 60 No. dwellings including age-restricted housing for older people with associated public open space, landscaping, ecological enhancements, drainage and other supporting infrastructure, with access from Barkham Road. Means of Access to be considered (with Appearance, landscaping, Layout and Scale to be reserved).

3.3. That application for the new housing proposed an amended access from Barkham Road to facilitate improved visibility and highway safety. The proposals which are the subject of this application will mirror the proposed access design.

Previous Application

3.4. The recent application (241556) was refused for the following reasons:

1. a) The proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area and countryside due to the increase in built form and hard surfacing further away from the existing building and access and loss of vegetation that would detrimentally impact the Green Route of Barkham Road.

b) The development would result in a harmful encroachment away from existing buildings/development and erode the rural gap between Barkham and Wokingham.
2. Insufficient information has been provided for the Council to determine that the proposal will make adequate provision for car parking.

3. The new hard standing to accommodate car parking would have a detrimental impact on the RPA of a protected tree TPO 1933/2023.
4. Inadequate information has been provided to determine the likely impact of the proposals on bats.

3.5. The way in which this proposal has addressed these criticisms is addressed in section 6 of this statement.

4. The Proposed Development

4.1. The description of development is as follows:

“Extension of existing public house to include remodelled pub/kitchen at ground floor, loss of staff accommodation, and introduction of 5 no. rooms of accommodation at first floor; together with associated changes to access, parking, landscaping and other ancillary works.”

4.2. The works comprise the following elements:

- Internal reconfiguration of ground floor of public house to allow for enhanced pub&dining/kitchen layout (note that there is no increase in floorspace);
- First floor extension of public house to accommodate 5 no. double rooms with en-suite bathrooms for overnight guests and removal of the existing staff accommodation quarters;
- Amended access from Barkham Road to improve visibility; and
- Associated changes to car parking and landscaping.

4.3. A schedule of accommodation (outlining the number and size of the new accommodation rooms) is included with the application.

4.4. Amendments to the existing access and parking arrangements are proposed to provide improved highway safety and parking provision for the new rooms (and other visitors/servicing). However, it should be noted that owing to the omission of the annexe building in this proposal (compared with the last), there is now no requirement for parking to the Barkham Road frontage area, which offers a significant improvement in terms of landscape and visual impact and further opportunities for planting.

5. Planning Policy

- 5.1. S.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that determination (of planning applications) must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan

- 5.2. The development plan for Wokingham comprises the Core Strategy (2010) and Managing Development Delivery (2014). For the avoidance of doubt, the application site is not within a Neighbourhood Area nor covered by a Neighbourhood Plan.

- 5.3. The following policies are pertinent to the proposed residential development of the site:

- CP1 Sustainable Development
- CP2 Inclusive Communities
- CP3 General Principles for Development
- CP6 Managing Travel Demand
- CP7 Biodiversity
- CP8 Thames Basin Heaths SPA
- CP9 Scale and Location of Development Proposals
- CP11 Proposals outside Development Limits
- CC01 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC02 Development Limits
- CC03 Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
- CC04 Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC05 Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks
- CC07 Parking
- CC10 Sustainable Drainage
- TB21 Landscape Character
- TB23 Biodiversity and Development
- TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (and general heritage)

- 5.4. Although the South-East Plan was formally abolished in 2013, policy NRM6 which applies to new development in the Thames Heaths Basin SPA remains in place.

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.5. The NPPF sets out the route to the government's objective of achieving sustainable development. It establishes, at paragraphs 11-14, the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
- 5.6. Chapter 4 is concerned with decision making. Paragraph 38 states:
- "Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments 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."*
- 5.7. Chapter 6 is titled "Building a strong, competitive economy". Paragraph 85 asserts:
- "Planning policies and 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."*
- 5.8. To support a prosperous rural economy, the following supporting provisions are made:
- "Planning policies and decisions should enable:*
- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;*
 - b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
 - (c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
 - d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. [para. 88]*
- Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land,*

and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist. [para. 89]"

- 5.9. Chapter 11 is concerned with 'making effective use of land'. Paragraph 124 includes provisions which support the development of land (both rural and urban) and particularly under-utilised land which allows multiple benefits to be realised, for example through missed used schemes (provisions a and d).
- 5.10. Chapter 12 provides policy for achieving well designed places.
- 5.11. Chapter 14 addresses Flooding. For flood zone 1 developments, a Flood Risk Assessment only typically required on site of 1 hectare or more.
- 5.12. Chapter 16 is 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. Paragraph 209 sets out the way in which proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets should be assessed. It states that *"in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."*

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
- Borough Design Guide SPD
- Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement

The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010

- 5.13. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended) provide the powers for local planning authorities, or "charging authorities", to choose to develop and charge a CIL on development in their area. It also sets out the legal tests on the use of S106 planning obligations.

Environment Act 2021

- 5.14. The Environment Bill received Royal Assent on 9th November 2021, meaning it is now an Act of Parliament. This makes provision for the introduction of 10% mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain to ensure developments covered by the Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) delivers an increase in biodiversity value post development.

The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 2017 (as amended)

- 5.15. Often referred to as the 'Habitat Regulations'. These are the mechanism by which the European Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (otherwise known as 'the Habitats Directive 1992'), is implemented in the UK.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

- 5.16. The principal Act relating to the protection of wildlife in Great Britain, with the lists of Protected Species of flora and fauna comprising Schedules 1, 5 and 8.

Emerging Planning Policy

- 5.17. The current Local Development Scheme (published September 2024) envisages adoption of a new plan by the end of 2026.

Stage	Date completed / anticipated
Issues and options consultation	August 2016
Spatial options consultation	November 2018
Draft Plan consultation	February 2020
Revised Growth Strategy consultation	November 2021
Proposed Submission Plan Publication	September 2024
Submission	December 2024 – January 2025
Examination hearings (stage 1)	April 2025*
Examination hearings (stage 2)	September 2025*
Inspector's post hearing letter	November 2025*
Modifications consultation	January 2026*
Inspectors report of examination	April 2026*
Adoption	May 2026*

- 5.18. This is an ambitious timetable, and moreover, uncertainty on date of the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (expected winter 2024/2025) may cause further delays to this process if the Council is required to find additional housing sites as a result of its revised housing need.
- 5.19. On the Council meeting of 19th September 2024, it was resolved that public consultation would imminently take place on the Regulation 19 (Submission Version) of the new Local Plan. This is 'live' and running until 13th November 2024.

6. Assessment

Principle of Development – Change of Use

- 6.1. Ye Olde Leathern Bottel is a traditional country pub with a dining room and outdoor beer garden. Whether defined under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) as a “public house” or a “drinking establishment with expanded food provision”, the current use of the site is **sui generis**. The proposed amendments, to introduce overnight accommodation floorspace to the public house, will see its use class remain as **sui generis**, because it will become a mixed-use planning unit.
- 6.2. In terms of the principle of development, the Local Plan is silent on support given to tourism uses. The NPPF however lends general support to the expansion of business. Paragraph 85 asserts:

“Planning policies and 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.”

- 6.3. Policy TB16 within the Wokingham Council Managing Development Delivery Local Plan requires sequential testing for ‘town centre uses’ to ensure that development is directed to the most sustainable locations and to help maintain the viability of the town centre. However, first, as a **sui generis** use, we do not consider that the B&B accommodation falls within the scope of a ‘town centre use’. Secondly, the ‘boutique’ nature of the proposals is such that it is not anticipated that the accommodation would be competing with the traditional high-rise ‘chain’ hotels which are available in the centre. The accommodation at Ye Olde Leathern Bottel will offer only a small number of rooms, with an intimate feel, and reflective of its country pub heritage.

Location of Development

- 6.4. Bizarrely, the pub building is located within the Development Limits of Wokingham, whereas the gardens and car park are not (see extract above). If the public house building is considered part of the settlement of Wokingham, then it would seem a flawed policy approach to exclude its grounds (including gardens and parking, which are a functional part of its use).
- 6.5. Notwithstanding this idiosyncrasy, we have considered the proposals against the pertinent spatial policies, in the event that the LPA does not agree.

Development inside the settlement boundary of Wokingham (the pub extension)

- 6.6. Although the proposal in its entirety is not confined to the development limits, the building work is – only changes to the landscaping, access and drainage will happen outside the development limits.
- 6.7. Policy CP9 provides definitive support for works within the settlement boundary, stating that:

“the scale of development proposals in Wokingham borough must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location, together with their accessibility. Development proposals... within the development limits will be acceptable in the major development locations of Earley, Green Park, Shinfield (north of M4), Twyford, Winnersh, Wokingham and Woodley”.

- 6.8. However, policy CC02 asserts the need for a more nuanced assessment at edge of settlement locations such as this. It states:

“Planning permission for proposals at the edge of settlements will only be granted where they can demonstrate that the development, including boundary treatments, is within development limits and respects the transition between the built up area and the open countryside by taking account of the character of the adjacent countryside and landscape.”

- 6.9. However, regardless, the proposals are fully respectful of the transition between the built-up area and the countryside, being limited to a very modest extension and landscape works which have little impact on the overall appearance of the building (in terms of scale and elevational appearance) or the grounds (in terms of openness and attractiveness of the pub setting). Further discussion on the design and landscaping of the proposals is set out in the subsequent sections.

Development outside the settlement boundary of Wokingham (the access and landscaping)

- 6.10. Policy CP11 states that development will not be allowed outside of development limits unless it meets the following (relevant) parameters (parameters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are not relevant to the proposals):

- 1) It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
- 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings.

- 6.11. The scheme adheres to both criteria.

- 6.12. With regards to criteria 1, as set out above, hospitality and tourism are an important part of the economy of outside of main town centres. The access and landscaping proposed will enhance the new accommodation will in turn will provide an additional and alternative revenue stream for the pub, to support its viability. This is important both in terms of employment (the pub currently employs around 30 staff, most of whom live locally, with opportunities envisaged for more hires to clean/service the new rooms) and in terms of the benefit to the local community in supporting this local asset.

- 6.13. The accommodation is envisaged to appeal to a wide range of leisure and business needs but is very likely to include (and be promoted for) weekend breaks in the countryside to enjoy pursuits such as walking, wedding accommodation or family get-togethers/celebrations.

- 6.14. With regards to criteria 2, the extension to the existing pub building is confined to within the Development Limits, albeit there are limited views of it from outside the Development Limits. It has been carefully limited and sensitively designed having regard to its historic character (see Heritage section below).

Design

- 6.15. No design issues were raised in respect of the previous application.
- 6.16. The design of the extension has been carefully considered to be sensitive to its surroundings in accordance with policy CP3, which sets out the general principles for development. The massing has been carefully limited to minimise the appearance of an increased roof form to the front of the pub. A Countryside Volume Assessment is provided within the Design and Access Statement (DAS).
- 6.17. The architectural character, elevational choices and materials palette have all been conceived taking cues from the locality. The DAS also contains further information on this.

Landscape and Coalescence

- 6.18. The previous application was refused, in part, for landscape reasons as follows:
- a) The proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area and countryside due to the increase in built form and hard surfacing further away from the existing building and access and loss of vegetation that would detrimentally impact the Green Route of Barkham Road.
 - b) The development would result in a harmful encroachment away from existing buildings/development and erode the rural gap between Barkham and Wokingham.
- 6.19. Taken as a whole, it would appear the Council's fundamental concern is that the development – by virtue of being 'in the countryside'/in a 'rural gap'/alongside a 'green route' would result in visual harm and coalescence.
- 6.20. We do not agree with the Council's assessment. The reason seems to overstate the role the pub site plays in maintaining a 'gap', which is already a developed plot of land. Moreover, the visual impact proposals on the site will be very limited, especially in the summer months, owing to the robust tree belts both on the northern/eastern/western site boundaries and south of Barkham Road),
- 6.21. Whilst we do not agree with the Council's assessment, the proposals have nevertheless been scaled back to respond to these points. Specifically:
- The annexe/barn building has been omitted; and
 - The parking provision has been reduced and repositioned to minimise the visual appearance from the site frontage; and
 - Additional landscaping measures have been employed.

- 6.22. As such, the increase in built form and hard surfacing and vegetation loss associated with the previous proposals has been significantly reduced.
- 6.23. Firstly, this means that the built form element of the proposals is now contained wholly within the Development Limits in the form of an (upwards) extension to the existing pub, such that there is no physical expansion into the 'gap' between Wokingham and Barkham.
- 6.24. Secondly, the relocation of the car parking and the introduction of a fully detailed landscaping scheme mean that the extent of 'greening' within the grounds of the pub can now be retained and in fact enhanced.
- 6.25. Turning to the offended policies listed in the decision notice:
- Policy CP1 concerns 'sustainable development', and it is our contention that the proposals would "maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment" required by provision (1) of the policy. Policy CC01 reiterates the 'presumption' enshrined within the NPPF.
 - Policy CP3 requires that proposals have no detrimental impact on landscape features; for the reasons above we contend that this test is met.
 - Policy CP11 is concerned with 'principle of development' and addressed in the earlier section.
 - Policy CC03 designates Barkham Road, along with all the other key arterial routes into Wokingham, as a Green Infrastructure Route. To be expressly clear, the pub site is not covered by the designation, but is located next to it. The opportunity for enhanced planting within the grounds, which will be seen to some extent from the road, would therefore represent an enhancement, even though we accept that the access (and associated hard surfacing) would be wider.
 - Policy TB21 provides that "proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues". The whole site is located within the J1 "Wokingham-Winnersh Settled and Farmed Clay" character area. The area is noted in the 2019 Landscape Character Assessment for its 'poor condition' and several mentions of erosion of quality arising from poor edge-of-settlement development. With this in mind, it recognises that *"there is scope to soften the urban edge and encourage habitat creation and active management in areas of undeveloped/unmanaged land"*. This will be achieved, firstly through the retention of existing trees, and secondly through a complementary landscaping scheme.
 - Sections 12 of the NPPF deals principally with (built) design, although there is a reference to the importance of trees – this is addressed in the Arboriculture section below.
 - Section 15 of the NPPF is concerned with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. More weight is to be given to valued landscapes and designated sites, of which this is neither. As stated above, the revised proposals provide enhanced landscaping to ensure that the landscape effects of the proposals are adequately mitigated addressed.

6.26. With regards to the emerging Local Plan, we note the proposed introduction of policy NE6 which would make the area immediately to the north of the pub grounds a Valued Landscape Area. This designation does not apply to the pub.

6.27. A more detailed commentary is contained within the Landscape Statement.

Arboriculture

6.28. The application is supported by a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment to demonstrate compliance with policy TB21 (the requirement for proposals to retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape).

6.29. All trees save for 2 no. U category trees (T21 and T25) plus a group (G3 – of limited landscape value), will be retained. Best practice/no dig methods will be employed in the setting out of the car parking and landscaping to ensure that the RPAs of retained trees are not adversely affected.

6.30. Reason for refusal 3 for the previous application states that the proposed hardstanding to accommodate car parking would have a detrimental impact on the RPA of a protected tree TPO 1933/2023. The proposed changes to the car parking layout resolve this concern.

Access and Parking

6.31. Policy CP6 requires that all new schemes:

- are sustainably located, where they can support a range of sustainable transport types;
- do not give rise to unacceptable highway congestion or highway safety impacts; and
- include an appropriate level of parking.

6.32. The Transport Statement submitted with the application describes the proposed access arrangements which mirror the proposals set out for the live planning application for up to 60 no. dwellings to the field to the north. The access will be shifted c. 15m to the west on Barkham Road and will include pedestrian footways on either side. This represents an improvement on the existing access in terms of pedestrian movements and visibility splays. The statement also provides detail on the expected trip rates arising from the proposals.

6.33. Policy CC07 states that proposals must accord with the parking standards set out in the Local Plan. The second reason for refusal relating to the previous application stated that insufficient information had been provided for the Council to determine that the proposal will make adequate provision for car parking. A car parking survey has now been undertaken and is appended to the Transport Statement.

6.34. Within the site, the pub customer car parking areas will be located off a right spur off the main access road. Refuse and servicing arrangements can be successfully accommodated. The car park will comprise 46 number of spaces, including accessible spaces, consistent with the requirements established by the survey.

Heritage

- 6.35. Although there were no heritage reasons for refusal in relation to the previous proposals, the revised application is supported by an updated Heritage Statement for completeness.
- 6.36. For the avoidance of doubt, the pub is not designated as a Listed Building nor allocated as a (non-statutory) Building of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character (policy TB26) in the Local Plan.
- 6.37. However, the third provision of policy TB24 is pertinent as it states that *“proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme.”*
- 6.38. The works comprise the upwards extension of the modern rear extension, and have been designed to be subservient to the principal building. By way of being located to the rear of the building, and on an elevation of lesser interest, the extension would not be visible in conjunction with the principal elevation of the asset, in particular from Barkham Road. Where visible from within the Site, the extension would be viewed as a later introduction to the building (as represented by the slate-tiled roof), within an area that has already been subject to change and would not alter the understanding of the building as an 18th-century public house with multiple phases of later development.
- 6.39. Overall, it is concluded that the proposed physical changes to the pub building would result in a minor degree of harm to its overall heritage significance. The level of harm has, however, been partially minimised by virtue of an informed design approach which responds to the vernacular of the building and surrounding area; and securing a long-term future for the building. The wider development of the site will result in no harm to the asset's overall heritage significance.

Drainage and Engineering

- 6.40. There were no drainage reasons for refusal in relation to the previous application.
- 6.41. The drainage strategy drawing which accompanies the application sets out both the foul water and surface water strategy for the scheme.
- 6.42. The foul water strategy is by means of connection to the existing network (Barkham Road).
- 6.43. The surface water strategy is also by means of connection to the existing network and would be designed to facilitate connectivity to the field to the north in the event of the proposed housing development coming forward. In addition, geo-cellular attenuation crates will be introduced into the car parking area to improve attenuation and reduce run-off, together with the use of permeable surfacing within RPAs. Policy CC10 sets out that all development proposals must ensure surface water is managed in a sustainable manner, as demonstrated through a Surface Water Drainage Strategy.

Ecology

- 6.44. The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment.

- 6.45. Holt Copse and Joel Park is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is a statutory site located 1.47km from northeast of the site; it is also an ancient woodland. One Local Wildlife Site (LWS), a non-statutory site, is present within 1km of the site (Figure 3), located 20m south of the site on the other side of Barkham Road. Bottle Copse is dominated by broadleaved woodland, part of which is listed as ancient woodland. Policy CP7 is concerned with ensuring that designated sites and/or species are conserved or enhanced in accordance with the principles of the NPPF and the Habitat Regulations, however these sites are not likely to be directly affected by the proposals.
- 6.46. The initial ecological walkover undertaken in May 2024 identified that the habitats on site comprised areas of amenity grassland, ornamental and native shrubs, several trees and hard standing car parking. None of the habitats are of particular 'value' for nature conservation. There are no priority habitats on the site, but deciduous woodland habitats (ancient woodland) are present.
- 6.47. The primary ecological consideration of the proposal relates to the potential for bats on site. There are hedgerows around the site, all of which are native except for H7, which provide potential commuting corridors for bats. The artificial lights of the car park may act as a deterrent to light-sensitive species foraging or commuting across the site. The pub structure has been surveyed for bat roost potential throughout the 2024 summer season, and the updated results and implications are included in the Preliminary Ecological Assessment.
- 6.48. Policy TB23 sets out that planning permission for development proposals will only be granted where they provide opportunities to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing, provide appropriate buffer zones for habitats and species, and ensure ecological permeability/linkages to the wider green infrastructure network. Proposed mitigation measures include a CEMP, a LEMP and a lighting scheme to be secured by a condition.
- 6.49. The proposals are subject to the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements introduced in early 2024. A metric and supporting plans have been produced by Ethos to calculate the baseline position and anticipated gain/loss position based on the detailed landscape plan.
- 6.50. Policy CP8 deals with proposals affecting the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Development which alone or in combination is likely to have a significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered. The policy wording and supplementary supporting documentation (including the Appropriate Assessment) makes clear that this applies to residential development only, owing to the expected regular continued recreational pressure associated with new homes. Other forms of development are therefore not expected to contribute to SANG.

Sustainability

- 6.51. Policy CP1 is the Council's over-arching sustainability policy which encourages development to enhance the quality of the environment. Development should also contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon development as soon as possible by including appropriate on-site renewable energy features and minimising energy and water consumption.

- 6.52. The proposals – which comprise part extension of a historic building and part new-build, will meet all Building Regulations standards for energy efficiency, building design, accommodation standards (part M) and meet statutory requirements for water resource management (in accordance with policy CC04). Waste management facilities and on-site recycling are shown on plan LWDO2-MAA-70-XX-DG-A-4001-P02.
- 6.53. It is anticipated that the requirement for a detailed sustainability statement is secured by condition (not required at validation stage for minor applications).

7. Statement of Community Involvement

- 7.1. Given the scale of the development, the applicant has not yet consulted with the community. However, letters were sent to local residents and stakeholders in respect of the adjacent application for up to 60 homes – which included contact details for Pegasus Group. We would be more than happy to correspond further local residents should any concerns arise when they are notified by the LPA/site notice.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a full planning application for the creation of 5 no. B&B rooms at Ye Olde Leathern Bottel public house, will support the pub's offering by providing self-contained overnight accommodation to serve as an additional and alternative revenue stream to support the local economy.
- 8.2. The description of development is:

"Extension of existing public house to include remodelled pub/kitchen at ground floor and introduce 5 no. rooms of accommodation at first floor; together with associated changes to access, parking, landscaping and other ancillary works."
- 8.3. Policy CCO1 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"*.
- 8.4. This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposals are consistent with the relevant planning policies both for development inside and outside the settlement, given the unusual location of the site straddling the boundary line.
- 8.5. The first reason for refusal in relation to the previous application proposals leans heavily on the notion of the pub site playing a role in upholding the 'gap' and 'Green Infrastructure Route' in this location, which it claims would have been adversely affected. While we disagree with this critique, the revised proposals nonetheless see the extent of the built form and hard surfacing reduced in response.
- 8.6. Given the use class is not consistent with a 'town centre' use, there is no policy requirement for a sequential test. In any event, the accommodation – which is expected to appeal predominantly to tourists/walkers etc – is unlikely to compete with chain hotels in the town centre geared more towards business use and proximity to other amenities.
- 8.7. The extension has been sensitivity designed to minimise the impact on the roofline of the historic pub building and to minimise its wider landscape and visual impact. The architectural character takes cues from the surrounding area and elevational detailing and materials are thoughtfully planned.
- 8.8. The technical design of the highways access, car parking and drainage have been carefully planned to ensure that the site operates safely, and allow for the retention of trees and implementation of both landscaping and biodiversity net gain schemes which enhance the pub garden and general setting of the proposals.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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