

03rd June 2026

Our Ref: 333103171/P1/A3/IS/NP

Reading Borough Council,
Civic Offices,
Bridge Street,
Reading,
RG1 2LU

BY PLANNING PORTAL: PP-14948613

Dear Sir/Madam,

**WHITEKNIGHTS BOUNDARY FENCE, UNIVERSITY OF READING WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS
FULL PLANNING APPLICATION**

On behalf of our client, the University of Reading, we are pleased to submit a planning application to Reading Borough Council ('RBC') for the replacement of existing boundary fencing and gates at the University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus, Reading.

The proposed description of development for which full planning permission is sought is as follows:

"Removal and replacement of existing boundary fencing and gates"

The following documents are submitted in support of the planning application:

- Completed Application Form
- CIL Form 1
- Planning Statement (June 2026)
- Heritage Statement (June 2026)
- Design and Access Statement (May 2026)

- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan (April 2026)
- Ecological Impact Assessment (May 2026)
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric (May 2026)
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology (April 2026)
- Site Location Plan (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-3101-S4-P02)
- Site Plan RBC Overview Sheet (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-3110-S4-P01)
- Site Plan RBC Sheet 1 (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-3111-S4-P02)
- Site Plan RBC Sheet 2 (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-3112-S4-P02)
- Site Plan RBC Sheet 3 (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-3113-S4-P02)
- Site Plan RBC Sheet 4 (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-3114-S4-P02)
- Site Plan RBC Sheet 5 (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-3115-S4-P02)
- Typical Fence and Gate Details Elevation Plan (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-7100-S4-P01)
- Proposed Planting Schedule and Management Notes Plan (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-SH-L-5101-S4-P01)

This application has been submitted electronically via Planning Portal (ref: PP-**14948613**).

A separate application has been submitted to Wokingham Borough Council for similar boundary fencing works to Whiteknights Campus within its jurisdiction.

This Planning Statement provides an assessment of this proposal in consideration of national policy (i.e., the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and the relevant policies of RBC's Development Plan to demonstrate that the proposed development is in accordance with local and national planning policy.

Site and Surrounding Area

The University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus is set in 130 hectares of parkland, featuring a lake, open grassland spaces, woodlands and the Harris Gardens, in addition to its academic and student accommodation buildings. The Campus is located to the southeast of central Reading, bounded by Shinfield, Elmhurst, Upper Redlands, Whiteknights and Wilderness Roads and Pepper Lane. The southeastern part of the Campus is situated within Wokingham Borough and the northwestern part of the Campus is located within Reading Borough.

As shown on the submitted Site Location Plan (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-3101-S4-P02), the Site comprises sections of the external boundary of Whiteknights Campus, which generally abut public highways and footways. These boundary sections are typically characterised by a combination of existing chain-link mesh fencing and close-board timber fencing, set alongside mature trees, hedgerows and grass verges.

In particular, along Pepper Lane, Shinfield Road and Elmhurst Road, the campus boundary fencing is visually integrated within a wider framework of planting. Public movement routes, including roads, footways and a public right of way run adjacent to and through this landscaped setting, with the boundary forming part of a broader parkland character.

As set out within the Design and Access Statement ('DAS'), the landscape setting of the campus has previously been assessed on behalf of the University of Reading through the Campus Landscape and Open Space Appraisal (CLOS), which defines a series of Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) across Whiteknights Campus. The sections of boundary affected by the proposed fencing fall within, or are influenced by, Landscape Character Areas Landscape Character Area A (University Gateway and Sports Park), Landscape Character Area B (Northern Neighbourhood), and Landscape Character Area E (Southern Learning – Pepper Lane gate area).

Whiteknights Campus contains a number of Listed Buildings, including 'The Lodge to Whiteknights Park' and 'No 11 (including Stables to North West and to North)', both of which are located in close proximity to the campus boundary. In addition, the proposed boundary treatment runs adjacent to the southern boundary of the Redlands Conservation Area.

In addition, a Public Right of Way footpath (EARL6) intersects the campus boundary at the western entrance to Chancellor's Way, close to its junction with Shinfield Road.

The Campus is subject to a site-specific planning policy within the Reading Local Plan. The Site is not within an area of flood risk, and is not at risk of surface water and fluvial flooding.

One 'Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation Zone' is identified within the site area; however, given the limited nature and scale of the proposed works, and the fact that the existing use of the Site will remain unchanged, there is no risk of exposure to contamination within the ground.

The Site lies within a mixture of red, amber and green Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones.

There is no relevant planning history to the application.

The Proposed Development

Stantec has been instructed by the University of Reading to produce a detailed application for:

“Removal and replacement of existing boundary fencing and gates”

The University seeks to remove the existing boundary fencing and gates at sections of the external boundary of Whiteknights Campus and replace them with a new, high-quality metal fencing and gate system. The replacement fencing would broadly follow the alignment of the existing campus boundary, along sections of Pepper Lane, Shinfield Road and Elmhurst Road, and no changes to land use are proposed.

The proposed development will provide a durable and high-quality replacement fencing system to improve the visual coherence and appearance of the campus edge while maintaining an appropriate level of security. It will reinforce the use of established main gateways for visitor access and orientation and ensure the fencing and gates respond sensitively to the surrounding landscape, trees and vegetation. The works would be carried out in a safe manner and in accordance with current arboricultural and ecological best practice.

The existing campus boundary fencing varies in condition, appearance and detailing, resulting in a boundary treatment that appears dated, visually inconsistent and lacking cohesion. In several locations, existing chain-link mesh fencing is damaged or deteriorated, such that it no longer forms a neat, clearly defined or robust boundary.

In places, the fencing runs close to mature trees and established planting. The form, scale and materials of the proposed fencing and gates have been carefully considered to ensure a simple and functional design that integrates appropriately within the wider landscape and parkland setting of the campus.

As set out in the Design and Access Statement ('DAS'), prepared by Nicholas Pearson Associates, the replacement fencing comprises a bow-top metal railing system, with matching pedestrian and vehicular gates where required. The design approach has been informed by the established campus landscape character, defined by wooded edges, parkland planting and visually permeable boundaries. The proposed bow-top railing responds positively to this context by reinforcing the existing landscaped enclosure, rather than introducing a visually hard or overly defensive edge. All fencing, posts, gates and fixings will be hot dip galvanised and powder coated, providing a consistent finish and long-term durability. Further details of the fencing and gates are provided in the accompanying 'Typical Fence & Gate Details' plan (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-7100-S4-P01) prepared by Nicholas Pearson Associates.

Planning Policy Context

This section sets out the national and local planning policy relevant to the planning application.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The adopted Development Plan for RBC comprises:

- Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) along with the Proposals Map;
- Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan (January 2023)

There is no made neighbourhood plan which includes the Campus.

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was originally published on 27th March 2012, however, has since been subsequently updated in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024. For the avoidance of doubt, the NPPF referred to in this planning statement is the 2024 version. It is a material consideration in determining planning applications and the chapters of the NPPF that are most of relevance in this instance include:

- **Chapter 4:** Decision-making
- **Chapter 8:** Promoting healthy and safe communities
- **Chapter 12:** Achieving well-designed places

- **Chapter 15:** Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- **Chapter 16:** Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Paragraph 39 of Chapter 4 (Decision-making) requires local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way, and should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Paragraph 48 states that planning law requires applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Chapter 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities) of the NPPF establishes the national planning policy framework for ensuring that development supports health, wellbeing, safety, social interaction, and community cohesion. It applies to both plan-making and decision-taking and is intended to ensure that development contributes positively to the social dimension of sustainable development. Paragraph 96 sets out the overarching principles that planning policies and decisions should achieve, including that development should be safe and accessible so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.

Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed and beautiful places) of the Framework is focused on achieving well-designed places which is a key aspect of sustainable development, creating better places in which to live and work. Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 135 emphasises that planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, are sympathetic to local character and history, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

Chapter 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) states at paragraph 187 that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, including minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Planning decisions should also recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Paragraph 187 emphasises that development should protect and enhance the natural environment, safeguard valued landscapes and biodiversity, and ensure that environmental impacts such as pollution are avoided or minimised. Paragraph 193 states that significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development must be adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for otherwise planning permission should be refused.

Chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) is focussed upon the protection and enhancement of heritage assets.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

The NPPG was first published in March 2014 and, alongside the Framework, provides guidance notes on various matters including design, natural environment, biodiversity net gain, and sports and recreation facilities.

National Design Guide

The National Design Guide sets out the fundamental principles for good design and demonstrates what good design means in practice, covering ten characteristics including context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources, and lifespan.

Reading Borough Council Adopted Local Plan

The adopted RBC Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and sets out where development will occur within the borough to 2036 and includes a range of planning policies relating to housing, retail, employment and community facilities.

The planning policies contained in the adopted Local Plan that are most relevant to the proposed development are provided in full below.

Policy CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) sets out that “Planning applications that accord with the policies in the development plan (including, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) states that “all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. [...] Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm, create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion, address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily, and are visually attractive as a result of

good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping. Applications for major developments, or other relevant developments, should be accompanied by a design and access statement that deals with all the above matters.”

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) sets out that “Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties”.

Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) seeks to ensure that “Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. [...] Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.”

Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) states that “The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.” Policy EN3 subsequently goes on to list opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.

Policy EN4 (Locally Important Heritage Assets) details “development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.”

Policy EN6 (New Development in a Historic Context) states that “In areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development.”. Policy EN6 continues to set out the list of townscape and heritage factors which would be considered when determining planning applications.

Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) states “On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.”

Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) notes that “new development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.”

Policy EN18 (Flooding and Drainage) sets out that “development will be directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding in the first instance, following the Sequential and Exceptions Test set out in the NPPF, and taking into account the effects of climate change. It will consider flooding from all sources, including fluvial, surface water, groundwater and sewer flooding. Where development in areas at risk of flooding is necessary, it will not reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding. Wherever possible, development should be designed to reduce flood risk, both on- and off-site.”

Policy ER2 (Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading) outlines the Whiteknights Campus as a focus for development. The complete policy is set out in full below:

“The University of Reading is a national and international educational establishment of strategic importance which will continue to adapt and expand over the plan period. The Whiteknights Campus as shown on the Proposals Map will continue to be a focus for development associated with the University of Reading. Such development may include additional staff, teaching, research and enterprise accommodation, infrastructure and services, and sports and leisure facilities among other uses. Access to and within the site will be improved where necessary.

Where development would result in a material need for additional students to be housed, it should be supported by an appropriate increase in existing or planned student accommodation. Provision of new student accommodation on the Whiteknights Campus, or as a reconfiguration or extension of nearby dedicated accommodation, will therefore be acceptable subject to other policies in the Plan.

Development will accord with the following criteria:

Areas of wildlife significance and current or potential green links will be retained or enhanced, and not detrimentally affected by development, including through light effects;

the safety of those using the campus will be maintained or enhanced;

there will be no significant detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties;

and the loss of undeveloped areas on the site will be weighed against the benefits of development to the wider community.”

Supplementary Planning Documents

RBC has several adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) but none are relevant to the proposed development.

Emerging Local Plan

RBC is currently preparing a new Local Plan Partial Update. This will include a vision, objectives, and strategy for the level and distribution of development in the borough up to 2041, including housing, economic and retail development, and new infrastructure.

The Local Plan Partial Update was submitted for independent examination on 9 May 2025. Stage 1 examination hearing sessions were held in November 2025 while Stage 2 hearings were held in February 2026. The submission Plan is currently under examination by the appointed Planning Inspector. Therefore, as the examination on the emerging Plan has not concluded and the process of actioning main modifications is still in progress, we consider the emerging Plan to have limited weight when determining planning applications.

The RBC Local Plan Partial Update: Proposed Submission Plan contains draft policy ER2 (Whiteknights Campus) which relates to the Whiteknights Campus. This builds on the adopted TB14 policy, outlining RBC's aim to work proactively with the University and WBC to support the continued adaptation and development of the Whiteknights Campus. It also refers to the provision of new student accommodation on or nearby the Campus. Full draft policy ER2 is set out below:

“The University of Reading is a national and international educational establishment of strategic importance which will continue to adapt and expand over the plan period. The Whiteknights Campus as shown on the Proposals Map will continue to be a focus for development associated with the University of Reading. Such development may include additional or replacement staff, teaching,

research and enterprise accommodation, infrastructure and services, sports and leisure facilities and development to reduce the University's carbon emissions among other uses. Access to and within the site will be improved where necessary.

Where development would result in a material need for additional students to be housed, it should be supported by an appropriate increase in existing or planned student accommodation. Provision of new student accommodation on the Whiteknights Campus, or as a reconfiguration or extension of nearby dedicated accommodation, will therefore be acceptable subject to other policies in the Plan.

Development will accord with the following criteria:

- Areas of wildlife significance and current or potential green links will be retained or enhanced, and not detrimentally affected by development, including through light effects;
- The safety of those using the campus will be maintained or enhanced;
- There will be no significant detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties; and
- The loss of undeveloped areas on the site will be weighed against the benefits of development to the wider community.”

Planning Assessment

This section assesses the proposal against relevant national and local planning policy.

Principle of Development

Policy ER2 of the Local Plan sets out that Whiteknights Campus will be a focus for development associated with the University of Reading including additional infrastructure and services and the improvement of access to and within the site where necessary. The removal and replacement of the existing boundary fencing and gates around parts of the University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus is considered acceptable in principle. The proposal is limited in scale, would not result in any change to land use, built form or campus layout, and would broadly follow the alignment of the existing boundary treatment.

Policy ER2 further sets out that development on the Whiteknights Campus will accord with the following criteria:

- Areas of wildlife significance and current or potential green links will be retained or enhanced, and not detrimentally affected by development, including through light effects;
- The safety of those using the campus will be maintained or enhanced;
- There will be no significant detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties; and
- The loss of undeveloped areas on the site will be weighed against the benefits of development to the wider community.

The proposal meets these criteria as follows:

- No areas of wildlife significance, including the Whiteknights Local Wildlife Site, or green infrastructure networks will be negatively impacted by the proposal. The works do not involve the removal of established vegetation beyond that immediately associated with the existing fence line. The proposals will respond sensitively to existing trees and landscape features, ensuring continued ecological connectivity and the retention of existing green infrastructure networks.
- The proposals will enhance safety of those using the Campus by clearly defining the site boundary and reinforcing well-established access points. This approach supports the principles of designing out crime through improved access control and site legibility and aligns with policy CC7 of the Local Plan. The development will not give rise to any highway safety concerns.
- The proposed works will not result in any significant detrimental impacts on neighbouring residential properties. The replacement fencing and gates will not generate additional noise, traffic or parking demand, as the works do not alter the use of the site. Instead, the proposal will replace an existing unattractive and piecemeal boundary treatment with a cohesive and visually improved fence, enhancing the appearance of the boundary and contributing positively to the character of the surrounding edge.
- The proposal does not result in the loss of undeveloped land, as it relates solely to the replacement of existing boundary infrastructure within the established Campus envelope.

The proposals will be confined to the existing boundary of Whiteknights Campus and have been designed to be of an appropriate height, appearance and materiality, ensuring that it respects the open areas and setting of any nearby heritage assets. By sensitively responding to the campus edge and surrounding

context, the proposal preserves local character and avoids harm to the significance of the heritage assets and to the local heritage interest of the non-designated Whiteknights Park historic park and garden.

At a national level, the NPPF (December 2024) supports sustainable development that is well-designed, responds positively to its context, safeguards amenity, and conserves the natural and historic environment. The proposal accords with these objectives by replacing the existing boundary fencing with a cohesive, more durable fence that enhances the visual coherence of the campus edge while maintaining appropriate levels of safety and security.

As set out in draft policy ER2 of RBC's emerging Local Plan, Whiteknights Campus will continue to remain a focal point for development, thereby necessitating the support of enhanced infrastructure. In this context, the provision of enhanced boundary infrastructure is both necessary and appropriate, supporting the long-term function of the Campus while providing a clear, cohesive and high-quality boundary treatment to the adjoining area.

The development proposal is therefore considered appropriate development within Whiteknights Campus in accordance with Local Plan policy ER2 and complies with Local Plan policies CC1, CC7, and CC8 which supports development that responds positively to its context and safeguards amenity. Overall, the principle of development relating to the replacement of the boundary fencing and gates on the Site is considered acceptable.

Design

Policy CC7 of the Local Plan states that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. Chapter 12 of the NPPF emphasises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

As set out in the submitted DAS, the existing boundary treatment is visually unattractive, dated, and lacks visual coherence, comprising a mix of different materials and styles. In several locations, existing chain-link mesh fencing is damaged or deteriorated. As a result, it detracts from the appearance of the campus edge and its wider setting, rather than presenting a neat, clearly defined or robust boundary.

The proposed replacement fencing and gates will comprise a high-quality bow-top metal railing system, selected to provide an appropriate level of security while maintaining a visually open and lightweight appearance. The design responds positively to the established campus landscape character, which is defined by wooded edges, parkland planting and visually permeable boundaries. By matching the form, height and finish of the retained contemporary bow-top railings along Whiteknights Road, the proposals

introduce a consistent and coherent boundary treatment that reinforces the landscaped enclosure of the campus.

As detailed in the Proposed Typical Fence and Gate Details Elevation Plan (ref: 30303-NPA-WK-ZZ-DR-L-7100-S4-P01), all fencing, posts, gates and fixings will be hot-dip galvanised and powder-coated in RAL 9005 (Jet Black), ensuring visual consistency, reduced prominence within the landscape, and long-term durability. The fencing height of approximately 1.8 metres and its overall extent are consistent with existing boundary treatments and are appropriate to the security and function of the Campus. Existing pedestrian and vehicular access arrangements will be largely retained, with six vehicular and pedestrian gates provided, designed to match the appearance and scale of the adjacent fencing.

The proposals are consistent with Chapter 12 of the NPPF (Achieving well-designed places), as it would improve visual coherence along the campus boundary and respond sensitively to its landscape setting. It also accords with Chapter 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities) by maintaining clear boundary definition and campus security without adversely affecting pedestrian movement, accessibility or public safety.

The proposed development also complies with Local Plan policy CC7, as the fencing and gates are appropriate in scale, materials and appearance, respond positively to their context, and preserve the character and amenity of the surrounding area, thereby delivering a high-quality design development. Additionally, the proposals retain and enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape, a requirement met through the introduction of a coherent, visually permeable boundary that integrates with existing trees, vegetation and parkland character.

Arboriculture

Policy EN14 of the adopted Local Plan notes that “new development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site [...] to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change”.

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (‘AIA’) and Arboricultural Method Statement (‘AMS’) have been prepared by Challice Consulting Ltd in support of this application and have been carried out in compliance with British Standard 5837:2012. The report includes a Tree Protection Plan which sets out the surveyed trees and hedges around the Site and their Root Protection Areas (RPAs), as well as the tree protection measures required.

The assessment confirms that the proposed development provides for the retention and protection of all the trees surveyed, with the exception of small trees less than 100mm in diameter that are required to be removed to allow for the removal of the existing fence and the placement of the new fence. Minor tree pruning is recommended as a matter of good arboricultural practice in order to achieve appropriate clearance from the proposed fencing and will not impact the vitality or amenity value of the retained trees.

There will be no significant incursions into the RPAs of retained trees. The AMS sets out detailed measures to ensure tree protection throughout the construction phase, including:

- All removal of the existing fence to be undertaken by hand, with the soil structure retained below ground and all roots over 25mm in diameter protected.
- Excavation of foundations for the proposed fence posts to be carried out by hand, retaining all roots greater than 25mm in diameter.
- Lining of all post holes with heavy-duty polythene to prevent cement leaching into the soil and causing damage to tree roots.
- Installation of protective fencing and ground protection in accordance with the approved TPP to safeguard RPAs for the duration of the works.

Overall, the arboricultural impact of the proposals is considered to be minor, with tree loss limited to low-quality specimens and trees retained where appropriate. All works would be undertaken in accordance with recognised arboricultural best practice to avoid harm to retained trees and associated habitats. As such, the proposals will result in very little impact to the surrounding landscape. The development therefore accords with Policy EN14 of the adopted Local Plan and paragraph 136 of the NPPF, which seeks the retention of trees wherever possible.

Biodiversity and Ecology

Policy EN12 of the adopted Local Plan sets out the policy requirements in relation to biodiversity. It states, "On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible."

An Ecological Impact Assessment (May 2026), prepared by Nicholas Pearson Associates, is submitted as part of the planning application and assesses the ecological baseline, likely impacts, and appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures.

The Site is not subject to any ecological designations, and it is considered that the development will not affect any nearby designated sites. Parts of the Site are areas of identified biodiversity interest and these are areas of woodland.

Habitats along the fence line are a combination of woodland and amenity grassland with a mixture of more managed habitats at the entrances to the university. The Ecological Impact Assessment identifies that habitats within and adjacent to the Site have the potential to support species including commuting and foraging bats, badgers, amphibians, nesting birds and other species. The Assessment sets out proportionate mitigation measures accordingly, and recommends additional ecological enhancements. These include the provision of hedgehog nest boxes and Schwegler bird boxes installed adjacent to the Site, contributing to biodiversity enhancement in accordance with policy EN12 of the adopted Local Plan.

To minimise potential impacts during construction, access will be taken from open land or the adjacent highway wherever possible. A narrow strip of vegetation (approximately 50cm) will be cut back to allow access, with trees and large branches retained. Slightly wider clearance may be required in locations where fencing is installed around retained trees or where off-site habitats prevent access from the highway. As trees, large branches and the canopy above the works will be retained, it is expected that habitats will recover quickly following installation works.

The Site lies within a mixture of red, amber and green Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones. However there are no mapped water bodies within 100m of the proposed working area. Aerial mapping does show several potentially suitable ponds within 250m of the work area.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric determines the proposals would result in an increase of 10.18% area habitat units and 11.16% hedgerow units. This 10% net gain in biodiversity will be achieved on-site by planting trees and a new species rich native hedgerow.

When installing the fencing, the cutting back of vegetation will be limited to a narrow strip with trees over 75mm and branches over 150mm being retained. Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron ponticum will be removed from along the fenceline/works area. The canopy above the fenceline will be retained. It is anticipated that vegetation will regrow quickly. Wherever possible, access will be taken from adjacent open habitats which reduce disturbance along the fenceline.

Overall, the proposed development would not result in the loss, deterioration or harm to habitats or species of biodiversity importance. Appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed, and the scheme delivers measurable biodiversity net gain. The development therefore accords with policies EN12 and EN14 of the adopted Local Plan.

Heritage and Archaeology

Policies EN1, EN3, EN4 and EN6 within the adopted Local Plan cover the relevant policy considerations on heritage and set out that development proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance, and any development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.

The heritage assets that form part of Whiteknights Campus and have the potential to be impacted by the proposals through a change to their setting include the 'Lodge to Whiteknights Park House' (Grade II Listed) and 'No 11 (including Stables to North West and to North)' (Grade II Listed). No non-designated heritage assets were identified as potential receptors to the development within the Reading Borough Council administrative area. Whiteknights Park is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Wokingham Borough Council, the majority of which falls outside of the administrative boundary of Reading Borough Council.

The proposed boundary treatments on Elmhurst Road are located at the southern boundary of the Redlands Conservation Area. Currently, the boundary treatments comprise timber fences in poor condition with overgrown ivy. Whilst the ivy does contribute to the verdant character of the suburban townscape and wooded parkland beyond, the fence makes a negative contribution to the significance of the Redlands Conservation Area due to its poor state of repair and would result in a limited direct impact on the Conservation Area.

In accordance with the statutory tests set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the proposals preserve the significance of the nearby listed buildings for current and future generations.

In line with Chapter 16 of the NPPF, the proposals have been designed to take account of the significance of heritage assets and their settings. As set out in the submitted Heritage Statement prepared by Stantec (June 2026), the proposals would not result in any direct impact on built heritage located within Whiteknights Campus. Any indirect impact to the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings would be minimal and would not harm their significance. Existing access points would be maintained, preserving historic spatial relationships and circulation patterns associated with the buildings and Campus, and the proposals would not alter the principal relationships, legibility or appreciation of the assets within their immediate surroundings, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 208, which seeks to avoid conflict between heritage conservation and development.

The replacement fencing and gates would be of a modest height and lightweight appearance, and would not be visually dominant in key views or compete with the heritage assets. The proposals would introduce a more coherent and consistent boundary treatment, reducing visual clutter and reinforcing a clear sense of place, without detracting from the character of the area. In doing so, the proposals accord with policies EN1 and EN6 of the Local Plan, which seeks to ensure that the setting of built heritage assets and the historic landscape is respected and enhanced.

The development therefore sustains the significance and positive contribution of heritage assets, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 210. For the same reasons, the proposals are consistent with relevant local planning policy, including Local Plan policies EN1, EN3, EN4 and EN6, which seek to ensure the protection of heritage significance and high-quality design that responds positively to context and the historic character of the area.

Overall, the proposals are considered to preserve the significance of both designated and non-designated heritage assets, result in no harm to the historic environment, and fully accord with national and local planning policy.

Given that the proposed works are localised, limited in extent, and confined to areas of previous disturbance, a separate archaeological assessment is not considered proportionate or necessary. Archaeology is therefore not considered a constraint to the applications

Summary and Conclusion

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application at the University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus, Reading for:

“Removal and replacement of existing boundary fencing and gates”

The proposed development seeks to remove and provide replacement of the existing boundary fencing and gates along sections of the external boundary of Whiteknights Campus. The new fencing would broadly follow the established boundary alignment and would not result in any change to land use.

The development would deliver a high-quality, cohesive and durable boundary treatment, replacing an existing visually inconsistent and dated boundary arrangement. The proposed bow-top metal fencing and gates have been carefully designed to integrate sensitively with the Campus' landscape and parkland setting, while maintaining appropriate security and reinforcing established access points. All works would

be undertaken in accordance with arboricultural and ecological best practice, ensuring the protection of retained trees and vegetation.

Overall, the replacement of the existing boundary fencing and gates represents a sustainable and policy-compliant form of development which would enhance the appearance, coherence and function of the campus boundary without giving rise to adverse impacts.

We trust that the submission is in order and that the planning application can be validated promptly. However, should you have any queries in relation to any of the enclosed, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01189 520337 or by email – ilaria.sutton@stantec.com.

Yours sincerely,



Ilaria Sutton
Planner
Stantec UK Limited