

**REFERENCE NO: CR/2022/0256/RG3**

**LOCATION:** [WESTERN END OF THE BOULEVARD, NORTHGATE, CRAWLEY](#)  
**WARD:** Three Bridges  
**PROPOSAL:** ROAD AND ACCESS IMPROVEMENT WORKS TO ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF TRANSPORT FROM THE END OF THE EASTERN BOULEVARD SCHEME TO THE JUNCTION OF THE HIGH STREET.

**TARGET DECISION DATE:** 26 August 2022

**CASE OFFICER:** Mr H. Walke

**APPLICANTS NAME:** Crawley Borough Council

**AGENTS NAME:**

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**PLANS & DRAWINGS CONSIDERED:**

Drawing Number	Revision	Drawing Title
5298-GA-001	P06	General Arrangement
70075298-0100-002	P01	Site Boundary

**CONSULTEE NOTIFICATIONS & RESPONSES:-**

- |    |                                     |                                 |
|----|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | WSCC Tree Section                   | No response received            |
| 2. | WSCC Highways                       | No objection, comments provided |
| 3. | CBC Planning Arboricultural Officer | No response received            |
| 4. | CBC Refuse & Recycling Team         | No response received            |
| 5. | Archaeologist                       | No objection                    |
| 6. | Homes England                       | No response received            |

**NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATIONS:-**

The application was publicised by site notices displayed on 4 July, with an expiry date of 26 July 2022.

**RESPONSES RECEIVED:-**

Metrobus responded to say that the company strongly supports the application. Their comments are set out in more detail below.

Two local residents have written in support of the application. Their comments state that this is a vital piece of infrastructure to connect a safe cycling route across the town centre. The changes would provide better access for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users. One respondent makes some comments on the scheme and suggests potential changes.

**REASON FOR REPORTING TO COMMITTEE:-**

The application has been submitted by Crawley Borough Council.

**THE APPLICATION SITE:-**

- 1.1 The application site extends from the High Street eastwards along The Boulevard as far as the access road to the south of The Boulevard between the two existing surface public car parks. On the

south side of The Boulevard, it includes the northern end of Bank Lane and The Broadway, together with the service/access road to the south of the westernmost surface car park. On the north side, it includes the service/access road outside the Post Office site on the north side of The Boulevard. Effectively, the site forms the section of The Boulevard that was not upgraded as part of the recent Eastern Gateway public realm improvement works further east.

- 1.2 The application site forms part of the public highway and the land is also owned by Crawley Borough Council.
- 1.3 The western part of the site lies within the 'Historic Core of Medieval Crawley' Archaeological Notification Area. Nos. 101 (The Tree) and 103 (The Punchbowl Public House) are listed buildings lying outside, but close to, the application site to the north and south of The Boulevard respectively. The area south of The Boulevard and west of Bank Lane falls within the High Street Conservation Area. There are some protected trees to the north side of The Boulevard and running southwards down the High Street from The Boulevard.
- 1.4 The site lies within the Long Distance View Splay from Tilgate Park defined in the Local Plan and The Boulevard itself forms a Linear Contained View. The part of the site to the south of The Boulevard lies within the Primary Shopping Area defined by the Local Plan. The site also lies within a Priority Area for District Energy Networks as set out in the Local Plan.

### **THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:-**

- 1.5 The proposal seeks planning permission for alterations and improvements in this area to enhance bus, cycle and pedestrian movements. The key works would involve:
  - Junction widening and the creation of bus lanes to facilitate eastbound right turns into The Broadway and westbound right turns onto the High Street;
  - Closure of the central of the three accesses on the north side of The Boulevard (close to the pedestrian crossing) and the creation of a signalised toucan crossing for both pedestrians and cyclists (to replace the existing pedestrian crossing);
  - Formation of cycle lanes on the north and south sides of The Boulevard. The north route would run from the High Street along the north side of the grass verge before linking to the newly created route on the carriageway outside the HSBC bank. The south route would run along the south side of the carriageway and turn south into The Broadway;
  - Hard and soft landscape improvements to upgrade footpaths and improve trees and green space;
  - Alterations to service roads on the south side of The Boulevard to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety;
  - Alterations to the service road on the north side of The Boulevard outside the Post Office site to be one-way east to west, and
  - Related changes to road marking and signage are also proposed.
- 1.6 Effectively, these works would continue recent Eastern Gateway public realm improvement works on The Boulevard along to the western end of the road. The works require a planning application as they are proposed to be carried out by Crawley Borough Council, rather than the local highway authority, West Sussex County Council, who benefit from permitted development rights covering such works. The proposal forms part of the Crawley Growth Programme.
- 1.7 As part of the application, the applicant has submitted the following documents:
  - Design and Access Statement
  - Proposed Materials
  - Construction Phase Plan
  - Road Safety Audit Final Designer's Response
  - Arboricultural Impact Report
- 1.8 In response to queries from WSCC Highways, the applicant provided a further response specifically to address them.

## **PLANNING HISTORY:-**

- 1.9 There is no relevant planning history on the site. The Boulevard and The Broadway were laid out in the 1950s as part of the comprehensive development of the New Town.
- 1.10 Recent related development has taken place at the eastern end of The Boulevard and along College Road. There was no planning application relating to those works, as they were undertaken by West Sussex County Council using its permitted development rights as the local highway authority.

## **PLANNING POLICY:-**

### **National Planning Policy Framework (2021)**

- 1.11 This document sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant sections for this application include:
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport. This states that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be identified and pursued. Patterns of movement should contribute to making high quality places. In considering proposals, sustainable transport should be promoted and safe and suitable access achieved for all. Priority should be given to pedestrian and cycle movement, followed by high quality public transport. Places created should be safe, secure and attractive and also respond to local character and design standards.
  - Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places. The creation of high quality places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Decisions should ensure developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting and establish or maintain a strong sense of place.

### **Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2020**

- 1.12 The following policies are relevant to this application:

**Policy SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)** – The Council will take a positive approach, in line with the planned approach to Crawley new town, to approving development which is sustainable and work proactively with applicants, stakeholders and other partners to find solutions. Development will be supported where it meets strategic objectives including becoming carbon neutral and addressing climate change; complementing the town's compact character and neighbourhood principles; respecting heritage; protecting and enhancing Green Infrastructure; creating a safe environment; providing for social and economic needs; and according with the Plan's policies and objectives.

**Policy CH2 (Principles of Good Urban Design)** – Proposals must support locally distinctive development patterns, landscape character and heritage; create defined frontages and public/private areas; create safe and attractive routes for all; connect places for people and integrate land use and transport; provide recognisable routes and landmarks; consider flexible development which responds to changing needs; provide diversity and choice to create viable places and meet local needs.

**Policy CH3 (Normal Requirements of all New Development)** – Development should be based on a thorough understanding of the significance and distinctiveness of the site and its wider context and demonstrate how attractive or important features of the site will be retained. These include views, landmarks, footpaths, rights of way, trees, green spaces, hedges, other historic landscape features or nature conservation assets, walls and buildings. Developments will also need to be of high quality in terms of their urban, landscape and architectural design and relate sympathetically to their surroundings in terms of scale,

density, height, massing, orientation, views, landscape, layout, details and materials. Individual or groups of trees that contribute positively to the area should be retained.

**Policy CH8 (Important Views)** – The Boulevard is defined here as a Linear Contained View, which the policy seeks to protect and enhance. The policy states that *“The Boulevard view lies between the Morrisons supermarket and the Central Sussex College Tower. Any proposals in the area will be required to retain, or enhance, the vista or to replace it with public realm of equal, or greater, townscape value.”*

**Policy IN3 (Development and Requirements for Sustainable Transport)** – Development should be concentrated in locations where sustainable transport patterns can be achieved through use of the existing transport network, including public transport routes and the cycling and walking network.

**Policy IN5 (The Location and Provision of New Infrastructure)** – Provision of new or improved infrastructure in appropriate locations will be supported where they add to the range and quality of facilities in the town.

### **Submission Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19)**

1.13 The Crawley Borough Local Plan is in the process of review. The Council carried out public consultation on the Submission Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) from January to June 2021. Limited weight can be given to the emerging policies, with the following being of note:

- Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy SD2: Enabling Healthy Lifestyles and Wellbeing
- Policy CL2: Making Successful Places: Principles of Good Urban Design
- Policy CL3: Movement Patterns, Layout and Sustainable Urban Design
- Policy CL7: Important and Valued Views
- Policy DD1: Normal Requirements of All New Development
- Policy DD2: Inclusive Design

### **Urban Design SPD – Adopted October 2016**

1.14 This document provides further advice on the principles of good urban design in the Crawley context, highlighting, in particular, the importance of massing and materials, public realm, street design and parking and sustainable design.

### **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:-**

The main issues for consideration are:

- Sustainable transport, highways and parking
- Design and heritage
- Arboricultural impact
- Impact upon amenity
- Water neutrality

### **Sustainable transport, highways and parking**

1.15 The proposed development relates to sustainable transport improvements along The Boulevard and highways issues are clearly a prime consideration.

1.16 The works would create a dedicated lane to allow buses to turn right into The Broadway and extend the existing lane to allow buses to turn right into the High Street from The Boulevard. Along with a bus priority loop at the signals, this would help to ensure the free flow of buses and provide passengers with quicker journeys. In turn, this would help to promote bus usage and reduce private car use.

- 1.17 New cycle lanes would be created to the north and south of The Boulevard, which would enhance and link up existing cycle routes. These would be one way, eastwards to the north and westwards to the south. There would be a new stretch of cycle route into The Broadway to enhance cyclist safety. These too are clearly improvements to sustainable transport provision in principle and supported by local and national policies.
- 1.18 Pedestrians would benefit from higher quality paving along the footpaths, to match the improvements to the east. In addition, there would be raised table priority crossings for pedestrians and cyclists on the service road north of The Boulevard and at the junction of Bank Lane. Along with the landscape improvements, these would create a more attractive environment for pedestrians in the area.
- 1.19 The Boulevard would remain two way for private vehicles, with no turn allowed into The Broadway. The service road to the north of The Boulevard, outside the Post Office site, would be one way (running east to west). The central access of the three existing would be closed. The improved toucan crossing with new landscaping and a new tree would be sited in that area. Motorists would no longer be able to use the westernmost part of the service road to the south of The Boulevard (west of the entrance to the westernmost surface car park). This would prevent vehicles impeding the free flow of buses along The Broadway. Whilst motorists would experience some changes in layout and movements on the service roads, The Boulevard would remain two way. It is not considered that a significant impact upon motorists would result.
- 1.20 West Sussex Highways responded to the original consultation with a number of queries, to which the applicant responded. With regard to cycle provision, they queried why the northern cycle lane was not adjacent to the road carriageway, but instead runs to the north of the trees outside the Post Office site. The applicant has responded that this is to avoid adverse impact upon those trees. A query was also raised about the creation of a cycle only route at the western end of the service road outside Lloyds Bank. The applicant responded that this is in part to avoid cars entering The Broadway and conflicting with bus movements and partly to offer an alternative route for cyclists. WSCC have not objected to this. The change would cause no significant problems for vehicle users, as the service road would become two way and vehicles would travel back in an eastbound direction to connect to The Boulevard. It would be likely to benefit both cycle and bus movements. Lorry movements into/out of the service yard would not be significantly affected.
- 1.21 The applicant has also provided a Road Safety Audit Stage 1 Designer's Response.
- 1.22 The proposal would result in the loss of fourteen vehicle parking spaces outside the Post Office site, leaving a total of fifteen. Some of the current spaces do not meet the required standards for chevron parking, given the adjacent carriageway width. The revised spaces will be more angled from the carriageway, resulting in the loss of the spaces. The three disabled parking spaces outside the Post Office site would be retained. Other spaces would be lost to create the width for the cycle route and improved footpath through this area. Given the extensive surface car parking on the south side of The Boulevard and the other public car parks in the town centre, this limited loss of parking is considered acceptable and the alterations to the layout would improve safety and manoeuvring in relation to these spaces, which would now be to the required standard.
- 1.23 West Sussex Highways did raise a number of other queries about issues such signage, road markings and signal waiting times. The applicant has provided a response and these issues will be fully addressed through the Traffic Regulation Order process. WSCC Highway's final comments state that *"there are aspects within the proposals that are dependent upon the outcome of consultation associated with required traffic regulation orders"* and through detailed design, but state that no highways objection is raised.
- 1.24 Metrobus, the operator of bus services in Crawley, strongly support the proposal. They comment that the project:

*"is the result of excellent collaboration with Crawley Borough Council and it manages to successfully deliver huge benefits for the sustainable modes of bus, walking and cycling while also improving the local environment. The design has been very carefully thought through with every detail considered for maximum positive impact."*

*Millions of bus users a year travel on many hundreds of buses a day through the Boulevard and the Broadway and it is one of the most challenging areas for delays due to traffic queues and parking on yellow lines. The proposal will allow buses to flow much better, resulting in shorter and more reliable journeys.*

*For the scheme to deliver the greatest benefits to buses it is essential that effective bus priority is provided as part of the scheme, along with enforcement of parking restrictions.”*

- 1.25 Overall, the scheme would deliver significant sustainable transport improvements and enhanced provision for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users. The scheme would also integrate well with the recent Eastern Gateway improvements. It is considered that it would improve sustainable transport options through the area, without adversely affecting motorists, integrate well with surrounding footpaths/cyclepaths and, as such, accords with national and local transport policies.

### **Design and heritage**

- 1.26 The scheme would continue the recent Eastern Gateway public realm improvements along the full length of The Boulevard. The main impact in design terms is really the proposed materials. The proposed materials would generally match those used in the recent improvement works. This includes the mix of silver, light and white paving on the north side of The Boulevard and resin surfacing and kerbs to match the recent cycleway improvements along College Road and The Boulevard. The table pedestrian/cycle crossing would be grey synthetic resin imprinted asphalt. Elsewhere, some existing kerbing will be retained and existing materials matched. Overall, the range of materials proposed is considered appropriate.
- 1.27 The improved surface quality, together with the landscape improvements, would enhance the appearance of the Linear Contained View along The Boulevard, in accordance with policy CH8 of the Local Plan.
- 1.28 The site falls partly within an Archaeological Notification Area. Place Services, the Local Planning Authority’s advisers on archaeological matters have raised no objection. They state that:
- “the proposed works, including the relaying of road surfaces and re-designing of junctions, will entail no deep excavations and are likely to have a minimal below-ground impact. Additionally, the area will already have been heavily disturbed by the construction of the current road and the installation of any associated drainage or other services. Accordingly, it is unlikely that significant archaeological deposits or remains will be impacted by this proposal.”*
- 1.29 Although the proposed works are fairly close to two listed buildings and a Conservation Area, the site already forms a public highway, has extensive hard surfacing and the proposals would have no significant additional impact upon these assets.
- 1.30 The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in heritage terms.

### **Arboricultural impact**

- 1.31 The applicant has submitted an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) with the application. The proposal would involve the loss of one Scots Pine, which has been topped at about 12 metres high. It has been classified as C1 (A category C tree is a tree “of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years”) under BS 5837 and does not have a high quality appearance as a result of works undertaken to top it. It is proposed to plant a replacement tree. Small additional areas of landscaping will be created along the route, primarily in the area where the central access to the north would be closed. The implementation of the landscaping works, including the planting of the new tree, can be secured by condition.
- 1.32 The AIA also includes a tree protection plan. Temporary fencing is proposed to protect the trees to be retained and again this can be secured by condition.

## **Impact on amenity**

1.33 The Boulevard contains buildings in a range of uses including residential. The application site already forms part of the public highway and is extensively hardsurfaced. There is no physical bulk or mass to the proposed development, so no harm such as overshadowing or overbearing impact would result. The proposals are intended to facilitate sustainable transport movements, rather than cater for significant increases in vehicle movements, so should not increase noise levels in the area. It is not considered that the proposals would have significant impact upon the amenity enjoyed by occupants of any surrounding buildings.

## **Water neutrality**

1.34 The Local Planning Authority received a Position Statement from Natural England on 14 September 2021. It raised significant concerns about the impact of water abstraction in the Sussex North Water Resource Zone upon the Arun Valley's protected SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. The proposal would involve no new connection to the water supply. A screening assessment has been undertaken which concludes that the proposal would be water neutral as a result. The Local Planning Authority has therefore concluded that the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of the protected sites and would not conflict with the obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

## **CONCLUSIONS:-**

1.35 The proposal would continue recent public realm and sustainable transport improvements by enhancing provision for bus, cycle and pedestrian movements within an attractive landscaped environment. The sustainable transport improvements will encourage travel by these means and help to address climate change. There would be no significant impact on amenity and the proposals are water neutral. It is recommended that planning permission is granted.

## **RECOMMENDATION RE: CR/2022/0256/RG3**

PERMIT, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.  
REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.
2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved plans as listed below save as varied by the conditions hereafter:  
(Drawing numbers to be added)  
REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. No development or site works of any description, including setting up works or storage of materials, plant or equipment, shall take place on the site unless and until all the existing trees/bushes/hedges to be retained on the site have been protected by fences in accordance with the details set out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and the Tree Protection Plan. The protective fencing shall remain in position for the duration of the works. Within the areas so fenced off, the existing ground level shall be neither raised nor lowered and no materials, temporary buildings, plant machinery or surplus soil shall be placed or stored thereon without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority. If any trenches for services are required in the fenced off areas they shall be excavated and backfilled by hand and any tree roots encountered with a diameter of 25 mm or more shall be left unsevered.  
REASON: To ensure the retention and maintenance of trees and vegetation which is an important feature of the area in accordance with Policy CH7 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 - 2030.
4. The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the approved details associated with the application.

REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of amenity and in accordance with Policies CH3 and CH7 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 and the Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document.

5. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping, including the planting of the replacement tree, shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the improvements hereby approved being brought into use, and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

REASON: In the interests of amenity and of the environment of the development in accordance with Policies CH3 and CH7 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 - 2030 and the Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document.

1. NPPF Statement

In determining this planning application, the Local Planning Authority assessed the proposal against all material considerations and has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions where possible and required, by:

- Providing advice in a timely and manner through pre-application discussions/correspondence.
- Liaising with consultees and the applicant and discussing the proposal where considered appropriate and necessary in a timely manner during the course of the determination of the application.
- Seeking amended plans/additional information to address identified issues during the course of the application.

This decision has been taken in accordance with the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework, as set out in article 35, of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015.





# ArcGIS Web Map



Crawley Borough Council  
Town Hall, The Boulevard,  
Crawley, West Sussex,  
RH10 1UZ  
Tel: 01293 438000

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